



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

MAINSTREAMING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DECISION MAKING AT THE LOCAL LEVELS: THE CASE OF
ADENTA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

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DECLARATION

I, Dzokoto Kofi Emmanuel, declare that this is the submission of my own work towards the attainment of the MPhil (Public Administration) and that, as far as my knowledge could serve me right, it contains no previously published material(s) by another person nor material(s) which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except instances where acknowledgement has been duly made in text.



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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that; this thesis was supervised in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Glory of God, my parents, siblings and all who supported me in this endeavor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to the Lord God Almighty for giving me the strength and knowledge to successfully complete this study. A few people are worth mentioning as their immense contribution and support also contributed to the success of this study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LED- Local Economic Development

ILO - International Labour Organization

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNCDF - United Nations Capital Development Fund

MCD- Municipal Coordinating Director

MDPO- Municipal Development Planning

CDSPO - Community Development and Social Protection Officer

MFO- Municipal Finance Officer

MIAO- Municipal Internal Audit Officer

MBO- Municipal Budget Officer

BAC- Budget Advisory Center

MCE- Municipal Chief Executive

MLGRD- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

NEEDS- National Empowerment and Economic Development Strategy

PRSP- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

TA- Transformation Agenda

UCLG- United Cities and Local Governments

MSMEs- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

MTDPs- Medium-Term Development Programs

GIZ- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

NGOs- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

MASLOC- Microfinance and Small Loans Centre

GEEDA- Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency

SADA- Savanna Accelerated Development Authority

1V1D- One Village, One Dam

1D1F- One District One Factory

CED- Community Based Economic Development

LDP- Locality Development Planning

ED- Enterprise and Business Development

HRD- Human Resource Development

CBEED- Community-Based Economic and Employment Development

CIDA- Canadian International Development Agency

DFID- Department for International Development

IMF- International Monetary Fund

WTO- World Trade Organization

PNDC- Provisional National Defense Council

ECOSOC- United Nations Economic and Social Council

DACF- District Assembly Common Fund

AdMA- Adenta Municipal Assembly

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ABSTRACT

Women constitute more than half of the world's population, their involvement and participation in all development processes is pivotal for inclusive development. However, "gender inequalities hamper the equal and significant participation of women in Local Economic Development processes. The issue of women's participation in development, decision making and most importantly, governance, has gained global attention and has necessitated considerable efforts at both international and local levels to bridge the inequality gap between men and women's participation in governance. Whereas previous studies have focused on gender participation in local economic development processes, little studies are found on mainstreaming women participation in LED implementation and processes at the local government level, thereby creating a gap in knowledge. The study revealed that women are fairly represented on the district LED sub-committee. They form less than one-third of the general assembly membership, needed to take major decisions. This composition does not favor the women as much as it favors men. It is therefore recommended that, there should be complete application of gender responsive approaches in all phases of the LED cycle in district planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes to promote women mainstreaming.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. It contains the background of the study, a statement of the research problem, research objectives, and research questions. The chapter also presents the significance of the study, the scope, and limitations of the study, the definition of terms, and chapter organization.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Gender equality in respect of every developmental decision-making must be all-inclusive including local economic development (LED). Women form more than half of the world's population (Trinh, 2019; Huq, 2016; Kassa 2015; Amponsah et. Al., 2019), but their involvement within organizations remains minimum, especially in decision-making and leadership positions. In effect, their marginalisation in developmental decision-making has serious implications in terms of their interests and preferences; and does not promote good governance and democracy (Trinh, 2019). Local governments and communities should agree to what programs and projects they want to espouse to achieve their LED visions, goals and objectives (Grävingholt, Doerr, Meissner, Pletziger, Rümker & Weikert 2006). LEDs are people-centered and locally specific alternatives to bolster employment and economic growth (Rutaremara, 2018).

To this effect, gender quality in the planning and processes of LED activities is essential for its promotion and development. It also helps to promote the Feminist theory that seeks to understand and conceptualize gender roles and advocates for the inclusion of women's interests in social organization. This Feminist theory further tries to define women's oppression, and attempts to give meaning to how these oppressions against women arise and the implications of same on humanity

as well as prefunding measures that would help liberate women from oppression and discrimination. Removing inequalities offers societies a better opportunity to develop, it is acclaimed worldwide that when women and men have relative equality, economies grow faster; children's health improves and there is less corruption (Mwakasangula, Msabila and Mushi, 2010). More recently, "mainstreaming gender has gained a new impetus with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", (Hosein, Basdeo-Gobin and Gény, 2020 p.7). Focusing on the situation of LED in different European countries, European Union (2007) emphasized that "the female world is a resource for local development not only because it adds to economic growth of the territory and its social reproduction, but also because it promotes and confirms alternative approaches to development" (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017, p. 172).

LED is a development approach aimed at achieving economic transformation, promoting local ownership and self-help at the grassroots levels. "It is a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation" (World Bank Urban Development Unit, 2003 p.4). The main and foremost goal of LED "is to stimulate local employment opportunities in the sectors that improve the community using existing human, natural and institutional resources" (Rutaremara, 2018, p. 47). The goals of LED are to create wealth, generate jobs, increase income and ultimately reduce poverty levels and improve the quality of life, for both women and men in the locality.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2006), assert that "LED means more than just economic growth. It is promoting participation and local dialogue, connecting people and their resources for better employment and a higher quality of life for both men and women". However, "gender inequalities hamper the equal and significant participation of women in LED processes"

(Vyas-Doorgapersad 2017 p. 170). The disproportional discrepancy in participation is not only harmful for women but also has adverse effects on the household and on the rural economy (Tanwir, 2013, p. 210).

Without women involvement in the LED process and implementation, its success rate would be low. Khan et al. 2006 cited in (Huq, 2016) insists that without the active participation of women and the inclusion of women's standpoint at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. For example, "in Ghana, though women comprise more than half of the total population, the status of women is much lower than men in every sectors of the economy" (Amponsah, Opoku, Amankwa, Mark & Dagba 2019, p. 7). Democracy cannot truly be beneficial for all of its citizens if more than half of the population are not represented in the political arena. Therefore, creating space for women to participate in local government is very momentous in enhancing gender equality in governments and gender sensitive policies.

Gender mainstreaming in LED processes "can bring the gender equality required for improved participation, taking into consideration "specific needs and priorities of poor women and men, with a particular focus on the removal of barriers to women's economic participation" (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017, p. 174). "Pro-poor, inclusive LED enables local government to address poverty, unemployment and social deprivation through strategies for promoting youth employment, empowering disadvantaged and marginalized communities, supporting development, as well as promoting gender equity and equality, among others" (Rutaremara, 2018, p. 48).

Specifically, "women inclusion in decision-making has been on the forefront of global development agenda since the United Nations organized the first women's conference in Mexico in 1975" (Morris, 1995 cited in Adam et al., 2018, p. 67). Some global forums recognizes the

difficulty of the Third World's women's involvement in development process. According to Adam et al., (2018, p. 68) "while such declarations increased an awareness and understanding of the problems facing women and their needs, it has not yet resulted in significant development priorities in terms of their expectations and aspirations".

Current trends have it that, "women are no longer perceived as beneficiaries of development programmes, rather they are critical stakeholders that have a pivotal role to play in development programming and delivery in their constituencies" (Adam et al., 2018, p. 67). "Women involvement in decision making processes in governance for sustainable development is very critical, not only because they constitute majority of the Ghanaian population but they are discriminated and underrepresented in the socio-economic and political development activities thereby widening gender gap" (Amponsah et. al., 2019, p. 7).

The exclusion of women from several developmental processes is an infringement on their rights and again exposes them to other dangerous social challenges. Olusola (2016, p.99) asserts that

"the contemporary governance at the local level is extremely discouraging for women. Local government presents a hostile, alienating and male dominated environment. Women feel continuously marginalized, stereotyped, taken for granted and experience little understanding or support".

There is the need for real interventions to support and enhance the inclusiveness of women in developmental processes including local economic development. Huq (2016, p. 172), opined that "unless women are involved in the decision and policymaking process at all levels of the state, changes in women's political and to some extent social and economic status will continue to be marginal."

Local government bodies play major roles in LED promotion and implementation and are considered as key actors in the LED implementation process (Ria, 2020; Helmsing, 2005). Local governments perform key roles in establishing favorable environment for local economic activities. They are responsible for providing infrastructure to facilitate business development, they also provide diverse services and implement rules for LED needs. According to Rai (2020, p.395), “key actors in the LED strategy consists of three partners specifically, the public sector (local government), private sector and local communities (civil society) for service delivery. The local government has to fulfill the leadership role; the private sector needs to contribute to the creation of wealth for the prosperity and civil society should be the part of a good governance process to ensure democratic principles in layers of society”.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Generally, both sexes are stakeholders in the local economic development (LED) agenda of society (Ria 2020; Helmsing 2003) and each plays a complementary role especially during LED policy implementation. Since LED strategy and action planning remains a key part of the LED process, it requires the inputs of both men and women to develop a comprehensive LED strategy and action plan. However, “women involvement in the transformation of local economies have received less attention in the discourse of LED” (Forson, Baah-Ennumh, and Mensah, 2014 p.5). For (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2010 p. 263), “the above low participation of women in development has critical implications for poverty reduction, sustainable human resource development and good governance.” Also, this problem does not encourage the attainment of full human potential and of sustainable development if a fraction of humanity is sidelined when it comes to decisions that affects their development and improvement as a society (Hannan, 2000).

According to the United Nations (2005, p. 1), “women contribution to the social and economic development of societies is more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres”. Yet their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. In practice, women remain vastly underrepresented compared with men in policy and decision-making bodies (Trinh, 2019). Women marginalization in local governance decision making does not only create a democratic deficit but also a gender gap in which there is exclusion of women and women's needs, interests and perspectives from governance (Mwakasangula et. al., 2010).

Likewise, many studies that investigated gender mainstreaming in LED have looked at it from the perspective of LED policy implementation (UNDP, 2021; Forsen et. al., 2014; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017; Moschidis & Ismyrlis, 2018; Yakovleva, 2007; Weikert, 2006; Rutaremara, 2008; Wekwete, 2014), thus how to include gender in LED strategy and its initiative implementation. Studies are scarce on how to increase women participation in LED action planning and decision making at the local government levels thereby creating a gap in the literature. For Mwakasangula et. al., (2010 p.5), “It is evidenced that there is a nature of biased gender-power relations in the local authorities, especially in rural areas. Women are marginalized when it comes to decision-making process while they are more involved in the implementation stage.”

For example, Forsen et al (2018) examined women participation in LED implementation at the district level and found that their educational level and family size significantly related to the roles they played in LED implementation at the district level. Similarly, at the national level, studies have explored the missing element of gender in development policies and goals; and align gender

to LED implementation in municipalities (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017). Also, at the global level, international bodies (e.g., United Nation's Development Program 2021; European Union, 2007; International Labour Organization, 2010; United Nations Capital Development Fund, 2014) have investigated the subject matter to the neglect of women participation in LED action planning and decision-making processes at the local government level.

The lack of adequate research on women participation in LED action planning and decision-making process at the local government level could makes LED governance and coordination challenging (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2010; Wekwete, 2014) thus, calling for the need to fill the research gap. Filling the gap would extend the theoretical literature on the need for female participation in LED process, it would provide a platform for an all-inclusive LED decision-making and aid policy makers in LED policy transformation. Empirically, it would assist LED practitioners determine and try to meet the needs of women, thus facilitating their full participation at every stage of the LED decision-making process and action planning. Moreover, it would bring women perspective to the center of attention in LED policies, LED planning and LED institutional development.

It is also important to fill this gap because, "marginalization and under-representation of women in decision-making arenas undermines their ability to influence policy-making and development programmes whilst also downplaying their development priorities (Adam et al., 2018 p. 78). Besides, "addressing the effects of gender discrimination and inequality is a necessary part of the socio-economic project of transformation" (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2002, p. 82). Moreover, "a focus on women as a deliberate LED strategy can provide significant benefits to the local economy and more importantly, to the general social fabric of the community" (Sam, 2014 p.18).

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine how existing municipal participation mechanisms, enable meaningful women participation in LED processes and decision-making.
- To investigate how participation of women in LED processes and action planning at the local government level can be mainstreamed.
- To explore the challenges of that come with mainstreaming women participation in LED processes and action planning at the local government level.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does the existing municipal participation mechanisms enable meaningful women participation in LED action planning and decision-making?
- How can participation of women in Local Economic Development action planning and decision-making processes be mainstreamed at the District Assembly level?
- What are the impediments in mainstreaming women participation into the Local Economic Development action planning and decision-making process of the assembly?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In recent times, the increasingly global attention being paid to the concept of local economic development makes this study both timely and significant. The findings of this study and the pertinent analysis are framed to contribute to the sparse of knowledge on women's participation in local economic development which in turn will help trigger an informed discourse and policy reform to mainstream women participation and inclusion in local economic development processes and implementation. The research also offers a thoughtful prospective for policymakers to re-examine national local economic development polices and laws, therefore, making way for more space for women to participate in policy-making and development planning at all levels of local

economic development planning. In addition, this research creates a number of learning and knowledge processes that are not essentially echoed in other women related studies conducted in the subject area. More significantly, this research proposes real policy recommendations and action plan to tackle women participation in local economic development planning processes. Last but not least, it's envisaged that this study would be beneficial to academicians and researchers as well as development actors involved in exploring and mainstreaming women participation in local economic development planning and policy-making.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one contains introduction and background of the study, the research problem, objectives of the research as well as research questions. The chapter also contains the significance of the study, limitations of the research and research organization. Chapter two reviews literature on local economic development, women participation and local government. The chapter also presents a discussion on the theory that underpinned the study. Chapter three presents the methodology used in carrying out the research. It also discusses the research approach, research design, the sampling technique and data collection instruments. Chapter four presents data, analyses and discusses of the research findings. Finally, chapter five provides a summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher's intent regarding this thesis is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of all economic development initiatives within local governments. Besides, findings of the study cannot be generalized, because it is limited to the study areas and cannot be said to be the case for all other district assemblies across the country. The study will have the following specific limitations;

One, this study is limited to decentralization as a concept despite the strong correlation between LED and decentralization. Grävingsholt et. al., (2006, p. 18) found that, “effective decentralization enables local governments to devise public policies in the area of local economic development that are in line with both local circumstances and needs”. Despite this fact, the study is limited from decentralization. This would help reduce the number of independent variables in the study and make the study concise.

Second, participation is also limited to women participation within the context of local government. Participation takes different forms but this study is limited to women participation within the context of local government.

Again, since the study falls within the concept of economic development at the local levels, it would not include macro-economic statistics.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Participation: According to the World Bank (1996, p.81), “participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them”.

Local economic development: Blakely (1994, p. xvi) defined LED as “the process in which local governments or community-based organizations engage to stimulate or maintain business activity and/or employment. The principal goal of LED is to stimulate local employment opportunities in sectors that improve the community, using existing human, natural and institutional resources”.

Local government: The Office for Public Administration (United Nations), defines local government as “a political subdivision of a nation or (in a federal system) State, which is

constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labor for prescribed purposes.

1.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter, the first of five, has briefly discussed local economic development, women participation and local government; and stressed for the need for women inclusion in local economic development processes and decision making at the local government level. The chapter apparently points to the fact that literature is silence on the need for women participation in local economic development processes but rather abundant on gender equality. The inclusion of women in all aspects of local economic development processes cannot be overemphasized, hence the need for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of the general literature on local economic development (LED), local government, and women's participation. Specifically, the chapter presents an overview of LED including a synthesis of some definitions of LED. It discussed the significance of LED, its phases, and approaches of LED. The concept of participation has also been discussed and a justification established for women's inclusion in LED processes and decision-making. Local government literature has also been reviewed in this chapter.

2.1.1 THE CONCEPT OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Literature depicts some conceptual challenges in having a globally standard definition for the concept of local economic development (Barkely, 1994; Mensah et al., 2013; Akudugu & Laube, 2013). "Some of these definitions concentrated on the strategies, actors and the end result which is to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the natives" (Agbevade, 2020 p.26). Different scholars define the concept based on the purpose of deployment. According to Pike, Rodríguez-Pose and Tomaney (2016, p.8), "definitions of local and regional economic development are inescapably context-dependent". For the purpose of this study, few definitions of LED are considered below;

Local Economic Development "can be defined as a participatory process that encourages and facilitates partnerships between local stakeholders. This enables the joint design and implementation of strategies that are mainly based on the competitive use of local resources with final aim of creating decent jobs and sustainable development" (Rutaremara, 2018, p. 47).

Ghana's National Decentralization Policy (2010) defined LED as "the process by which local governments, local businesses and other actors join forces and resources to enter into new partnership agreements with each other or other stakeholders to create new jobs and stimulate economic activities in municipalities, towns and villages".

Another definition of LED presented by Blakely (1994, p. xvi) is "the process in which local governments or community-based organisations engage to stimulate or maintain business activity and/or employment. The principal goal of LED is to stimulate local employment opportunities in sectors that improve the community, using existing human, natural and institutional resources". "The efforts of local governments in the direction of economic growth are also referred to as Local economic development" (Moschidis & Ismyrlis, 2018, p. 3).

According to Purbasari et al., (2019, p.4),

"The term 'local' in the LED concept refers to the process of appreciating the endogenous potentials and optimally exploring the existing local capacities. While, the term 'economic' is directed towards the identification of investment opportunities which support entrepreneurial activities and facilitate the access to new markets. Finally, the term 'development' is concerned with the process of promoting the improvement of living and working conditions in the region, through the creation of new jobs, the retention of existing jobs, and the generation of income".

Despite the different definitions for LED, "all the various definitions underline two important issues. One, LED is a process. This process provides the opportunity for the citizenry to participate in the local development process and second, LED is driven by local actors (that is, state and non-state actors) from different societal sectors" (MLGRD, 2014 p.2). In addition to this, considering

the various definitions provided here, none can be accepted as what LED is holistically about, nevertheless, each one provides an insight into the concept. The common feature among these definitions is that LED interventions are aimed to create employment opportunities, generate income and enhance the standard of living of the local people. It is supposed to be a local development strategy used to develop regional or rural areas.

2.1.2 OVERVIEW OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For several decades, LED has been evolving as a development strategy. LED has emerged globally as a vital planning approach for local economies (Rogerson, 2015). Whereas the concept of LED is quite recent in developing countries (Akudugu & Laube 2013), it has assumed major importance as a policy issue in many developed countries of Europe, North America, Australia, and Asia. Mayer (2014) concurred that, LED is a relatively new field of research and policy formulation in many developing countries. It's planning and implementation processes are still evolving with various alternative theories and approaches.

The question of catalyzing LED planning initially emerged in Europe and spread to other advanced economies. According to Kahika & Karyeija (2017, p. 1), "the period from the 1960s to the early 1980s witnessed economic decline in many developed nations of Europe". During the said period, many of these countries experienced de-industrialization and capital flight, which, coupled with the effects of globalization, gave rise to the adoption and use of LED as a development strategy to assist in the regeneration of many local areas and cause development. For Adam et. al., (2018, p.67), "localized and inclusive approaches to development quickly evolved throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s."

Indeed, several Africa countries are yet to adopt concrete policies on the concept due to varying reasons. Generally, lack of proper institutional structures to aid the implementation of the concept,

non – concessive policies on LED, neglect of regional and local levels by the political elite in the distribution of the national cake and ‘political settlements could account for the unpopular nature of LED in many developing countries. This notwithstanding, the concept had its own evolutionary processes in African. Rogerson & Rogerson (2010) noted that to a large extent, South African research on LED grew out from pragmatic considerations, seeking responses to new opportunities linked to ways of dealing with economic restructuring issues in declining localities.

In Uganda, decentralization policy was introduced in Uganda’s governance system with the overall goal of empowering citizens to take charge of their own development in order to improve their livelihood (Bitarabeho 2008). Poverty levels in Uganda remained high upon the introduction of the decentralisation policy and no visible development was in sight. This led to a policy shift in the implementation of the decentralization system of governance to address the gap in the original design of the decentralization policy (Mutabwire 2012). The said policy shift brought on board full-scale implementation of LED as an additional objective of the decentralization policy aimed at enhancing development at the local level.

To this effect, a number of governments in African have started putting in place policies to implement local development initiatives with LED as the driving force. South African is premiering this race with several policies already in place and apparently the most successful country in LED implementation. The promotion of LED in South Africa can be traced in the apartheid era where cities pursued a limited degree of LED largely in the form of place making Rogerson (1999). However, prior to the end of the apartheid era, several policies of the South Africa government had forced its local governments to get involve in LED implementation and this has increased the involvement of South African local governments in LED implementation.

Notable among these policies includes; the 1996 Republican constitution of South Africa (**no. 108 of 1996**) which serves as the cornerstone for LED in South Africa and provides for a developmental level of local government. The 2005 South Africa Policy Guideline for implementing local economic development in South Africa is another initiative which identifies economic growth and poverty eradication as the key overarching goals of LED (Mayer, 2014 p.4). The South Africa LED Framework Stimulating and Developing Sustainable Local Economies which emphasizes on municipalities creating conducive environments for investment contrary to attempting to create jobs is another policy in that respect.

Other policies such as the Local Government Transition Act of 1993 and its subsequent Amendment of 1996, The Green Paper on Local Government, The Urban Development Strategy, and The Rural Development Framework are other enactments which are clear manifestations of South African's government's commitment to the realisation of LED.

In the case of Nigeria, the country adopted the National Empowerment and Economic Development Strategy (NEEDS), which served as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) to the country. The national vision 20:20 and the transformation agenda (TA 2011 – 2015) were also adopted to serve similar purposes. “The transformation agenda places special emphasizes on creating employment, reducing poverty and inequality and improving and sustaining the wellbeing of all Nigerians” (UCLG, 2016 p.6).

In Uganda's context, The Government of Uganda has enacted legislation and sectoral policies to facilitate the implementation of Local Economic Development which has been formulated in line with the 1996 Constitution of Uganda. It provides for the establishment of a sound financial base with reliable sources of revenue by Local Governments. For instance, The Local Government Financial and Accounting Regulations; Financial Institutions Act and Micro Deposit Taking

Institutions Act; The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Policy and the National Cooperative Policy were all enacted with the aim of facilitating LED.

Uganda adopted a LED policy “with an intention to further deepen the decentralization process, eradicate poverty and ensure inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth and development at the locality level” (Byabashaija et. al, 2012 p. 2). The Uganda’s national policy on LED is design to fight unemployment levels within the various MMDAs, provide an enabling environment for local governments to mobilize more funds via expanding the tax base and supports the country’s strategy of implementing private sector led-economic interventions.

In the case of Ghana, “LED in the pre-independence up to 1987 period has generally been described as the ‘lost decades’, by 2014, it reached a policy ‘maturing’ stage” (Mensah, Bawole, & Ahenkan 2017, p. 1). However, out of the national official LED policy; MMDAs are supposed to develop action plans and incorporate that into their Medium-Term Development Programs (MTDPs). The development landscape of Ghana in 1988 shifted towards local development as the country took up and executed a broad decentralization programme through the enactment of the local government law of 1988 (Tandoh-Offin 2013). Mensah et. al., (2017) attributed this shift to the failure of top-down development strategies to promote development and genuine local ownership of the development process. The shift could also be attribute to a lack of coordination and collaborative governance in LED implementation.

Still within the Ghanaian context, some attempts have been made in Ghana to promote LED both in terms of policy and practice. Earlier studies on LED had focused on its implementation, initiatives and conceptualisation (Azunu & Mensah, 2019, Mensah et. al, 2018, Mensah et. al., 2017, Adei et. al., 2015 and Akudugu, 2013). Other researchers assessed the concept from a gender perspective which explored women contribution to local economic development (Forsen et. al,

2018). While the policy and institutional framework on the concept had again been explored by (Mensah et. al, 2013).

Some global development-oriented institutions have also play significant roles towards the promotion and implementation of LED. In fact, international development agencies (e.g. ILO, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) and non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) have all played significant roles in terms of the formulation, implementation and financing of LED in Ghana (Akudugu and Laube 2013; Mensah et al. 2017).

Policies such as the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) I and II and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II can be cited as policies relating to the concept of LED. Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC), Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GEEDA), Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) and most recently one Village, One Dam (1V1D) and One District One Factory (1D1F) are all policies in an attempt by various governments in Ghana to implement LED.

Despite these efforts by various governments and institutions, there is still no concise and comprehensive policies on LED in many African countries including Ghana (Mensah et al, 2013). An attempt to enact and implement such policies will not only solve local development problems, it will also be a response to the challenges of globalisation and migration as well as serving as the drive for decentralisation. In this regard, policies on LED has being identified as the main machinery through which development to the local levels could most likely be achieved. Ideally, policies are thought of as the main system which provides the framework for the accomplishment of intended objectives. Hence, for the goals of poverty eradication and LED to be achieved, practitioners must look no further than adopting and implementing LED in its highest form.

2.1.3 BENEFITS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The significance of LED is increasingly becoming imminent in the development trajectories of our localities and seen by the UN as the cornerstone of local development. “All around the world, local governments, the private sector and civil society organizations are demanding better ways to achieve local economic development, a cornerstone of sustainable development” (UN-HABITAT, 2005). LED enables local people, local governments and local industries (Alysha et al., 2003). Arguably, “LED offers an integrated, context sensitive approach to development rather than a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution” (Rogerson, 2015, p. 280). LED “can be seen as a platform to capacitate women and men, hence promoting the socio-economic evolution of households” (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017, p. 170).

LED has “the premise of fostering and promoting economic development, and creating economic opportunities to prepare the ground for more employment opportunities in partnership with all relevant stakeholders in the local context” (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017, p. 171). LED is intended to enhance both the vitality of the local economy and the fiscal capacity of the local government (Alysha, Claire & Anita 2003). LED strategies can serve to mitigate the negative consequences of urban growth trends and enhance the positive impacts (Alysha et al., 2003).

LED offers people the opportunity to participate in the development of their own localities. (Grävingsholt et al., 2006), notes that, the main features of LED is participation and partnership. Partnerships and participation help to guarantee two important outcomes of LED strategies: economic growth and poverty reduction (Alysha et al., 2003). LED offers the opportunity for people to now have a say in the types of economic activities that goes on within their localities. This is affirmed by Rogerson as he notes that “until recently people living in many areas of the

developing world had little say or control over economic activity occurring in their territory; now they are beginning to adopt a more proactive stance with respect to their own future” (Rogerson, 2015, p. 280).

LED could be used to combat the serious problem of rural-urban migration. Unemployment remains a great problem for many countries and world leaders. Development approaches to sustainable employments especially at the local levels to reduce the rate of rural urban migration remains a top-most concern for many African countries. LED proves to be the ultimate approach to tackle this global menace. LED is intended to help cities tap their potential and shield patterns of urban migration from an even longer-term economic decline (Alysha et. al., 2003).

Kahika & Karyeiya (2017, p. 1) also see “the important of LED as an empowering strategy with the overall goal of empowering the grass-root people so that they are able to initiate and propel their local socio-economic prosperity through the promotion of self-reliance”. In rural areas, “the imperative for pursuing LED is no less evidence, the idea is to address systematic improvements in local economies (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010 p. 11). The concept of LED has proven to be the ultimate strategy to be used in driving economic development to the remote areas of the world, this is due to the fact that, potentially, the concept is capable of reviving and rejuvenating the economic situations of remote and local areas.

Another social benefit of LED is that the preparation and implementation of its strategies assist in making local institutions more transparent and accountable thereby contributing to developing a civil society (Rogerson, 2015). “It’s also imperative to underline that the implementation of inclusive development programs has become the major means through which various communities mobilize local and external resources to streamline development and redress inter-generational development problems in their localities” (Adam et al., 2018, p. 67). The participatory approach

in LED processes and development makes it more open and transparent which ensures accountability to both stakeholders and beneficiaries of LED initiatives.

2.1.4 APPROACHES / STRATEGIES OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The approaches to LED have been classified differently by various scholars (Grävingholt et al., 2006; Helmsing, 2001; Rodriguez-Pose, 2001; Meyer-Stamer 2005; Blakely, 1994). Helmsing (2001, pp. 64-72) classifies LED approaches into three types as follow;

- I. *Community Based Economic Development (CED)*: Community locality development is the process by which local residents build organisations and partnerships that interconnect profitable businesses with its goal as the development and empowerment of individuals in the community. In this approach, the local people participate in the LED interventions with the role of defining the needed changes in the community whereas organizations look for ways to make their actions and investment meet the needs of the whole community. According to Mensah et al., (2018 p.207), “the strategies that are used in community based economic development include training of local businesses, women empowerment and enhancing human capital through training”. Its overall aim is to stimulate a sense of belonging, to promote self-help and empowerment, to contribute to self-employment, to improve living and working conditions of the local peoples in settlements and to create public and community services.
- II. *Locality Development Planning (LDP)*: LED approach requires certain infrastructure, services and socio-economic capital for it to succeed. This is normally achieved through planning and putting in place the needed infrastructure and capital. Local development planning (LDP) aims to maximize positive externalities of LED to reduce conflict, thereby enhancing attractiveness of an area such that LED goals are achieved. LDP ensures

participatory LED, physical planning and development control, urban planning and design, infrastructure and socio-economic overhead capital (Meyer-Stamer 2005).

- III. *Enterprise and Business Development (ED)*: This approach deals with the economics base of an area and enhances small and medium enterprises development. It concentrates on the economic base of a locality with emphasis on exporting firms which normally cluster for several benefits such as support for each other, decrease in business costs due to contiguity to each other, lobbying for superior training and education (Helmsing, 2001).

Blakely (1994, pp. 137-139) categorized “the approaches of LED into business development (BDA), human resource development (HRD), locality development (LD) and community-based economic and employment development (CBEED)”.

- I. The BDA approach involves the creation of a local conducive and enabling environment for business development. “This is an important approach to LED as the attraction, the creation and retention of business enterprises help maintain a strong and vibrant local economy” (Oduro-Ofori 2011, p.45). It is intended to redress the balance between community as a social construct and business as an instrument for growth and wealth creation.
- II. The HRD approach is geared towards linking employment needs of the business sector and the job formation process. The human resource of any locality is very important to the economic development process of that locality. The importance of human resources has been attested by Swack and Mason (1987, p.343), “who alluded that one of the most valuable resources in a community is its people”. In affirmation (Eddy, 1981 cited in Asamoah, Osei-Kojo and Yeboah-Assiamah 2013, p.28) intimated that “without the meanings that are provided by the human mind, organizations are only piles of stone and

metal and blobs of ink on pieces of paper”. For Blakely (1994, p.208), this approach has mainly four categories thus, “vocational training and education, job placement, client-oriented job creation and job maintenance. It uses tools such as customized training, targeted placement and local employment programs”.

- III. LD approach is concerned with land and image management with attempts to ensure the efficient use of land and improvement in existing land use practices. Land use must be environmentally friendly. The image management aspect of this approach is concern with the improvement of the characteristics and the appearance of settlements. The components of this approach include land use planning, the development of visual themes that create a sense of identity, improves the amenity base or livability of the community or local area, improves the attractiveness of the civic center in an effort to improve local business.
- IV. The CBEED approach is a mixed approach of LED that seeks to create employment opportunities and stimulate investments to a particular local area through the implementation of a range of activities. The approach cuts across all the other approaches within the concept and puts together strategies and tools from the other three approaches as identified by (Barkly, 1994). According to Oduro-Ofori (2011, p.46), “this approach involves the development of financing scheme institutions which will supply start-up capital for community projects and activities, provision of technical assistance and work spaces for localities to initiate their own economic activities”.

Gravingholt et. al., (2006 pp. 31-32) also provided similar classification of the approaches to local economic development based on local circumstances. The various approaches include; “Sector and Business Cluster Development, Encouraging Local Business Growth, Encouraging New Enterprises, Promotion of Inward Investments and Investments in Hard and Soft Infrastructure”.

In the view of Rodríguez-pose (2001, p.9), “the approaches of local economic development are simply classified into hardware, software and the ‘orgware’ schemes”.

From the literature, it is evidently clear that there is no one specific classification of LED approach that is deemed good or bad. The approach adopted by a particular community depends on the territorial factors that are peculiar to that community. Moreover, the type of resources, local institutions and private based entities within the locality mostly determines which approach is favorably and should be selected. Developing and planning a LED participatory design is dependent on local conditions, cultural and political context.

No matter what form LED takes, it has one primary goal, thus, to increase the number and variety of job opportunities available to the local people (MLGRD, 2014). Alysha et al (2003) notes that regardless of the models employed, most strategy development models emphasis two critical components: participation and partnerships. Participation of various stakeholders helps to ensure an inclusive and comprehensive strategy.

2.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

The literature presents several connotations of participation which makes it difficult to have a universally accepted definition for the concept (Kassa, 2015; Tanwir, 2013; World Bank, 1996). “It is therefore not surprising that despite the extensive use of the term in the development parlance, there exists only a rudimentary understanding of the complexities of the multidimensional concept of participation among stakeholders” (Tanwir, 2013, p. 211). Participation “is part of the process and definition of development, there is, therefore, a growing consensus that people everywhere have a basic human right to take part in decisions that affect their lives” (Amponsah et al., 2019, p. 10).

According to the World Bank (1996, p.81), “participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them”. “Participation is a development approach, which recognizes the need to involve disadvantage segments of population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their wellbeing” (Kassa, 2015, p. 3). Participatory development in Africa, came to the pinnacle of development discourse following the signing of the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Amponsah et al., 2019). Participation as used in this study refers to local population typically women being part of LED decision making at the local government level.

Participation has become an essential ingredient and a prerequisite of good governance (Amponsah et al., 2019). Since sustainable development has become a necessity of the time, participation is widely legitimized as a vital prerequisite to achieve sustainable development (Dibra & Strica, 2019). According to Jabeen (2010, p.256), “there is a great realization that seeking public participation on various social, political and public issues is important to promote people’s empowerment and enhance their confidence in governing institutions.”

Participation can significantly enhance the quality of public management and public service delivery (Grävingholt et al., 2006). Participation improves confidence and trust in the government. This is premised on the observation that when governments are committed to participation, the level of transparency in government dealings increases, thus raising the level of confidence and trust the citizens have in their government.

Participation enables citizens to contribute ideas and participate in policy making and collaboration encourages partnerships and cooperation across levels of government and private institutions (Abu-Shanab et. al., 2013). Participation “is a cornerstone to a democratic and transparent system

which redistributes power to citizens who are excluded from the political and economic process. The public participation is legitimized as a basic principle of democracy” (Dibra & Strica, 2019, p. 84).

2.2.2 JUSTIFICATIONS FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AND DECISIO-MAKING

Women’s increased participation in governance structures is viewed as a vital way to redress gender inequalities in societies (Nations, 2005). Development as a process of increasing people’s capacity to determine their future means that people need to be included in the process of planning their needs and development (Amponsah et al., 2019). Kassa (2015, p. 6) assert that “the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy.”

There is the need for women inclusion in LED processes and decision making because their exclusion has been cited as one of the challenges of economic development among many countries. In line with this argument, Orisadare (2019), alludes that the poor presentation of women in elective positions has been a keen social development issue. Similarly, the “equity of access to the decision-making processes must be balanced with efficiency in promoting LED and the provision of public services” (Alysha et al., 2003, p. 13).

A situation of past practices of reducing women to a subordinating position in a society cannot be allowed to continue (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2002), hence the need for women participation in developmental decision making including LED. “LED can be seen as a platform to capacitate women and men, which promotes the socio-economic position of households” (Vyas-Doorgapersad 2017 p. 170). Within the context of LED, the ILO (2010 p.4) states that “gender equality focuses on participation in governance; access to decent employment opportunities and

work conditions; access to resources and services; and a non-partisan approach to whether one is male or female”.

The inclusion of their perspectives and experiences into the decision-making processes can result to the solutions that satisfy larger number of the society, which have social benefits, better and more appropriate social, political, legal, and economic solutions for their problems (Kassa, 2015). “Participatory LED strategy development acknowledges the linkage between open and democratic political systems, individual economic empowerment and LED” (Alysha et al., 2003, p. 10).

Decision-making in the development of LED strategies is consultative. Ultimately it is the local authority who is responsible for the final strategy and who have the final word. This pre-existing inequity presents a barrier to ensuring the concerns of the poor and marginalized populations (Alysha et al., 2003). Actions that empower rural women and encourages their participation in economic enterprises need to be informed by an understanding of their primary impediments (Tanwir, 2013), therefore, their inclusion in LED processes and decision making would offer them the opportunity to present their own case and impediment for consideration.

Women’s role in decision making is one of the most important questions for consideration in the movement for their empowerment, women become empowered if they are able to participate in decision making equally with men (Islam, 2012). Women still face several socio-cultural and religious challenges which hinder their participation and are still largely ignored by their male counterparts (Islam, 2012). In this regard, “the issue of gender equality in terms of representation and participation in various governing institutions has also gained global attention” (Jabeen, 2010, p. 256). Women’s participation “in the political process of development is momentous from the consideration of both equity and development. Their demands, hopes, and opinions must be reflected in social and national development” (Islam, 2012, p. 72).

2.2.3 WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

PROCESS

The issue of women's participation in development, decision making and most importantly, governance, has gained global attention and has necessitated considerable efforts at both international and local levels to bridge the inequality gap between men and women's participation in governance (Gyimah & Thompson, 2012). On a global scale, "the international development organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, Asian Development Bank, DFID and other developing bodies believe that without having equal participation of women in all spheres of life, the goal of poverty reduction, sustainable development and good governance could not be achieved" (Jabeen, 2010, p. 260).

The global importance of female representation is also due to the "various efforts of the international development organizations, institutions and donors including the United Nations, CIDA, DFID, the World Bank, IMF and WTO for overall gender equality and elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender" (Jabeen, 2010, p. 261). According to Daniel Odoom, Opoko & Ntiakoh-Ayipah (2017, p. 95), "having women representatives in political and other decision-making institutions that work on behalf of all citizens has been a topic of immense interest and policy consideration at the European level for the past several decades".

The principle of equality of men and women was recognized in the United Nations Charter (1945), and subsequently in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Many international conferences, such as the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women in 1992 held in Switzerland and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 held in China, addressed to ensure rural women's increased participation in the decision-making process in achieving gender equality and development.

Other global conferences, including the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), and the World Summit for Social Development (1995) have recognized that, despite the progress made globally in improving status of women, gender disparities still exist, especially in regard to participation in electoral politics. “The low participation of women in these positions affects their progress in improving the legal and regulatory framework for promoting gender equality since very few women are influencing the legislative process” (Kasomo, 2012 p.57).

The Beijing Platform recognizes that women's equal participation in decision making and political life is vital for the advancement of women. According to Ciommo and Schiavetti (2012, p.6), “the participation of women in planning and management decisions is necessary and should be motivated”. The possibility for all citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. At the same time, full and equal participation of “both women and men in political decision making provides a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society, and may as such enhance the legitimacy of political processes by making them more democratic and responsive to the concerns and perspectives of all segments of society” (Kassa, 2015 p.1). Women’s participation in the decision making process has a significant impact on their improved status and greater role in society.

Kassa (2015, p.1), alludes that “it is true that more than half percent of the world’s population are women. But they lack access to political decision making as compared to their counter parts at all levels of government. So, women’s equal participation in decision-making and politics is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but a necessary pre-condition for women’s interests to be taken into account”. According to the UNDP Human Development Index report, there is a low global representation of women in key political and decision-making positions across the globe.

Table 1 below summarizes decision- making positions in countries across the globe and their female representation in Labor force participation and Parliamentary positions.

Table 1. Parliamentary positions and Labor Force participation of women in a global perspective.

COUNTRY	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX 2021		GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX 2021		S.G.D 5.5 Share of Seats in Parliament 2021 (% Held by Women)	Labor Force Participation Rate (%Ages 15 and Above)	
	Female	Male	Value	Rank		Female	Male
Switzerland	0.944	0.976	0.018	3	39.8	61.7	72.7
Norway	0.950	0.966	0.016	2	45.0	60.3	72.0
Iceland	0.947	0.971	0.043	8	47.6	61.7	70.5
Finland	0.934	0.945	0.033	6	46.0	56.5	64.0
Australia	0.932	0.963	0.073	19	37.9	61.1	70.5
Denmark	0.937	0.957	0.013	1	39.7	57.7	66.7
Sweden	0.941	0.952	0.023	4	47.0	61.7	68.0
Ireland	0.934	0.947	0.074	21	27.3	56.5	68.6
Germany	0.931	0.952	0.073	19	34.8	56.8	66.0
Netherland	0.925	0.956	0.025	5	39.1	62.4	71.3
Algeria	0.680	0.773	0.499	126	75	15.7	64.5

South Africa	0.686	0.727	0.405	97	46	46.2	59.9
Ghana	0.614	0.649	0.592	130	14.5	64.5	72.2
Cote D'Ivoire	0.516	0.581	0.613	155	15.6	45.9	64.9
Nigeria	0.495	0.579	0.680	168	45	47.9	59.6

Source: UNDP, 2022. UNDP Human Development Report 2022.

2.3.1 THEORITICAL UNDERPINING OF THE STUDY

This aspect of the study situates the research within a theoretical context by adopting a theory deem useful for guiding the study. Against this backdrop, the feminist theory has been adopted.

2.3.2 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: FEMINIST THEORY

This study is guided by a feminist theory, specifically the liberal feminism approach. According to Amponsah et. al., (2019 p.8), “feminism is a defending movement of social equality among sexes in order to withstand gender discrimination and patriarchy”. A feminist theory is an approach to understanding and conceptualizing gender roles and advocates for the inclusion of women’s interests in social organization. Liberal feminism is a gradualist approach to improving the position of women in society by promoting equal opportunity through legislation while, at the same time, challenging the socialization process that accepts gender inequality. That is, liberal feminists work within the structure of mainstream society to integrate women into that structure, often using a model of individual rather than structural deficit. Feminist theory tries to define women’s oppression, it attempts to give meaning to how these oppressions against women arise and the implications of same on humanity as well as prefunding measures that would help liberate women from oppression and discrimination.

The main underlying assumptions of feminist theories is about dealing with women's conditions of discrimination in life and work; women centered practice; hearing women's different voice compared with men; and, the strength of women in working with diversity. Feminist theory is founded on three main principles (Ropers-Huilman, 2003), thus, Women have something valuable to contribute to every aspect of the world. Second, as an oppressed group, women have been unable to achieve their potential, receive rewards, or gain full participation in society. Finally, feminist research should do more than critique, but should work.

For the purpose of this study, a feminist theory was useful for the following reasons, one, the theory provides an explanation into socio-cultural and environmental constraints that impede women in any social construct. The theory was deemed fit to help provide and suggest explanations about the social factors that influences women participation in local governance decision making. Secondly, a feminist theory suggests measures of enhancing women interactives with men and hence improve their qualitative participation in affairs. Third, the theory was also relevant as it leverages on the experiences of groups of individuals regardless of their sex or gender. Since the study emphasizes on women groups and associations in local governance decision making processes, the theory would help provide a better understanding of the experiences of these groups in relation to women participation in local governance. Finally, this theory has also been used by related studies on women and gender affairs which further justifies its underpinning of this study. In other circumstances, "feminist analysis helps women to understand how they are oppressed and dominated and often inspires them to engage in efforts to bring about broader social change" (Orisadare, 2019, p. 3).

Feminism development has three major waves (Hewitt, 2010; Ferguson, 2017; Rampton, 2008). The first wave occurred during the 19th and the earlier 20th centuries and was centered on legal and

political rights. The second wave occurred during the 1960's and the 1990's. It evolved in the way of anti-war, civil right movements and an increasing concern about different marginalized groups of people in the world. The second wave differed from the first wave in that it “drew in women of color and developing nations, seeking sisterhood and solidarity and claiming ‘women’s struggle as class struggle” (Rampton, 2008 p.8). The third wave emerged in the later parts of the 20th century up to 2016 (Ferguson, 2017). This wave breaks constraining boundaries of gender, including what it deems essentialist boundaries set by the earlier waves. The commonality among the three waves is about efforts to avoid oppression and discrimination against women and possibly bring women at par to men in all aspect of life except biological in sex.

2.4.1 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the study discusses relevant empirical literature in relation to the objectives of the study.

2.4.2 PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE DECISION-MAKING

Development as a process of increasing people’s capacity to determine their future means that people need to be included in the process of planning their needs and development (Amponsah et. al., 2019). Many donor organizations now require beneficiary entities to include participatory avenues in their project design before they receive donor funding (Uddin, 2019). This requirement stresses the need for citizen participation in local governance. Since LED is increasingly becoming a key part of local administration, it suggests that citizen participation in LED promotion and implementation cannot be underestimated. More importantly, the role of local women within the local economy can be showcased when they have appropriate participation avenues to participate in the District LED process.

In view of the foregoing, some current specific participatory mechanisms that support citizen participation in local governance include; general assembly meetings, budget committees' hearings, standing committees, sub-committees, local-level elections, and town hall meetings (Act 963, 2016; Act 462, 1993). Per the local government 1993 Act 462, an assembly conducts its deliberative functions through sub-committees. The sub-committee meetings provide the opportunity for members of the assembly to deliberate and make policies concerning the District. This is the main medium through which the local people via their representatives get to participate in local governance affairs. This suggests that women can equally employ this same medium of participation in local governance decision-making when they contest and win elections to become Assembly Members. This means the sub-committees discuss all issues including LED affairs and women Assembly Members would be part of these discussions to make decisions relating to LED implementation in the District. Accordingly, it is also in line with the local governance Act 2016 (Act 936) that MMDAs can constitute other sub-committees in addition to the standing committees to help in the administration of the district. To this extent, the establishment of a District sub-committee provides a major participatory platform for both men and women to contribute towards local government planning and decision-making. For the emphasis on women's participation in decision-making at this level, Act 462 further requires that the composition of the Executive Committee of the assembly should involve at least one assemblywoman who must be elected among assembly members. The committee system currently provides an avenue through which women participate in the decision-making system of the assembly.

The district-level elections are another existing participatory avenue through which women could participate in the decision-making process of the assembly. A study conducted in Techiman by Yeboah-Assiamah et al., (2014), indicated that district-level elections were a major form through

which local citizens participated in local governance. This platform provides a major opportunity for women to first take the decisions as to who represents them as their assembly members at the district assembly. Besides, it also affords women the opportunity to be elected to serve as women assembly members in which they would get to directly participate in major decision-making processes of the assembly. In 1994, 1998, 1989, and 2002, women made up 3%, 5%, 6.6%, and 5% of elected assembly members respectively (Branya et.al. 2015). This same medium of participation offers community women the opportunity to become unit committee members which is also another way through which they could participate in the decision-making processes of the assembly by serving as unit/urban/area council members. By implication, as more women are elected to serve as Assembly members and Unit committee members, more women would be able to participate in local government decision-making processes through the District structures. Moreover, women also have the opportunity to contest and be voted for as presiding members of a district. In that capacity, they hold some level of authority when it comes to decision making at the assembly level since they preside of general assembly meetings. Concerning the district level elections, such are the various existing participatory platforms women are able to explore. According to Offie-Aboagye (2000), the passage of the PNDC Law 207 saw a setup of one hundred and ten District Councils with their corresponding District Assemblies. 34 urban councils, 250 town councils, 108 Zonal Councils and 828 Area Councils and still about 16,000 Unit Committees to contribute to articulating the interests of the citizens at the local levels.

Despite these efforts, the effectiveness on the use of district level elections as a participatory channel by women in local governance decision making remains inconclusive. On one breadth, studies suggest that local government elections have provided the opportunity for women to become assembly women through which they had authority to deliberate on diverse issues of the

assembly (Yeboah-Assimah et.al., 2014; Offie-Aboagye, 2000; Ahwoi, 2010). On the contrary, other researchers found that, district level elections as a way of getting women to participate in local governance is ineffective due to poor representation and apathy among local folks towards local level elections. In a study by Gyimah and Thompson (2008) women's participation in terms of representation at the sub- district level in general has been very low. This means that, having women to participate in the decision-making processes of the assembly within the district sub-structures is ineffective as their participation at that level depends upon their election as unit committee members. The district sub-structures are ineffective also because they lack the needed resources and there is no incentives or motivation for women to contest as unit committee members resulting in weak sub-structures. Gyimah and Thompson (2008) recommended the need to support the district sub-structures to push through the mechanisms of development agencies to enhance active women's participation in the governance process.

Another major participatory system that existed for women's participation in local government decision-making is the quota system. Offie-Aboagye (2000) noted that, in an attempt to resolve the problem of low women participation in local governance, successive governments adopted a quota system as a policy measure. Per this, (Act 462, 1993) reserves a 30% quota for women out of all the MMDAs. In 1998, the Government of Ghana gave a directive that reserved 30% of the appointed membership of assemblies for women, and assemblies selected about 30% women (Branya et. al., 2015). To date, many MMDAs at the management levels still employ the quota system in trying to address the problem of low women participation in local government decision-making since the system provided a good platform to increase women's participation in local governance decision-making. This suggests that the quota system served as a useful participatory

avenue that enhanced women's participation in local governance and its decision-making processes.

2.4.3 GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gender is defined as “the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity” (Budlender, 2001 p.20). According to Rwanda's National Gender Policy (2010, p.7), “gender is seen as the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men; girls and boys. The commonality between these definitions is the fact that gender encompasses a biological element of either being a male or female, and the perceived societal acceptable norms associated with being a male or female. It is worth noting that, the relationships and characteristics associated with gender are subjected to change depending upon circumstances. Such circumstances culminate into the need to harness gender mainstreaming in decision-making, implementation and feedback processes (Rutarmara, 2018).

In a gender equitable society, men and women continue to make different choices, but gender biases cease to influence those choices (Mayou & Mackie ,2008). Gender equality “encompasses equality of rights, equal value, equal status, equal access to resources and benefits and equal participation in decision making to voice their needs and to claim this equality” (Terrillon, 2010 p.7). This entails that there is a fair process to women and men that promotes their operation at a level playing field. As an accepted strategy for promoting equality, “gender mainstreaming helps integrate the different needs of men and women into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social spheres” (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017, p.51). The ultimate goal of mainstreaming gender is to achieve equality and equity, where necessary (Rutaremara, 2018).

Gender mainstreaming remains an important issue at the global level which kept gaining the attention of world leaders to address the challenge. In the view of Vyas-Doorgapersad (2017), the need for gender mainstreaming in policies and policymaking processes is currently being identified at global level. In the past, various women conferences were organized to push for gender equality at all levels of governance and decision-making. Currently, the common approach being adopted by many governments is the affirmative approach. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (2004) gender mainstreaming is “a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated”. UNDP document entitled Gender Equality in Public Administration (2014, p64) defines gender mainstreaming as “a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres”. In the work of Terrillon (2010, p.6), “Gender mainstreaming is understood as the “the integration of a gender perspective and gender analysis into all stages of design, implementation and monitoring of projects, programs, policies or planning at all level (local, regional, national)”.

Analyzing the foregoing definitions, all definitions failed to capture the rhetoric behind the integration of gender in the various processes. Gender mainstreaming is supposed to achieve a purpose and such should be captured in any definition that attempts to explain gender mainstreaming. Nonetheless, all definitions identify the presence of male and female in the processes and emphasizes on their active participation in these processes. Considering all three definitions, gender mainstreaming could simply be viewed as efforts towards achieving equal

authority for both men and women over all development processes and benefits. According to Meilute (2005, p.1044) “gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, approach and a means to achieve gender equality”. “In gender mainstreaming, the interdependent or complementary roles of men and women are recognized” (Rutaremara, 2018 p.44).

Gender inequalities hamper the equal and significant participation of women in LED processes hence there has been the need for gender mainstreaming in policies and policymaking processes at global level (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017). Gender mainstreaming in LED processes can bring the gender equality required for improved participation, taking cognizance of the “specific needs and priorities of poor women and men, with a particular focus on the removal of barriers to women’s economic participation” (United Nations, 2014). For the purpose of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in LED promotion and implementation, the National LED policy and Action Plan (2020) was built around the principles of gender equality, equality, equity and inclusiveness in local economies. It, therefore, encourages effective and inclusive participation of different stakeholders without distinction based on status, gender or class. MMDAs will ensure that “LED is inclusive and provides appropriate employment and livelihood opportunities for women, youth, people with disabilities/HIV, informal economies, zongos, inner cities and other marginalized groups” (national LED policy and action plan 2020, p.11). The overwhelmingly discrimination against women is basically due to gender discrimination which could be resolved through gender mainstreaming. Generally speaking, mainstreaming gender in every intervention area leads to the inclusive and sustainable development of societies (Terrillon, 2010).

2.4.4 CHALLENGES OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The literature presents diverse factors which hinder citizen participation in local governance and these challenges affect both men and women. The lack of resources, proximity to meeting venues, socio-economic factors, level of education, and culture or religion of the people are some common factors that affect the participation of local folks in local government decision-making. By extension, these factors could equally account for the inability of local women to participate in the LED process and decision-making. The lack of resources to effectively organize participatory forums which provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the decision-making processes of their local governance is a serious challenge for many MMDAs. In the view of Gravingholt et al., (2006, p.36), “participation as a development concept is expensive to implement, thus, participatory mechanisms entail transaction costs such as time and information requirements”. Similarly, Boon et al., (2013, p.40), found that “Stakeholder participation may also be very expensive, particularly the cost of delays in preparation and implementation arising from the need to consult and negotiate with the other stakeholders”. Citizen participation in local governance remains a serious challenge because, no specific funding or financial arrangements are purposely meant for citizen participation, making it very difficult for the MMDAs to be able to engage their citizens.

The proximity of participants to local government meeting venues/forums is a major contributing factor that impedes citizen participation in local governance. This situation could be tied to the nature of roads within the district. Once the roads leading to the district office or meeting venues are in a deplorable form, it discourages local citizens from participating in local government meetings. Masiapato & Wotela (2017 p.6), notes that “obviously, poor road infrastructure curbs

mobility of community members and, therefore, they cannot attend meetings”. Meetings are so far the most common medium through which participatory decisions can be conveniently made. When people are unable to attend and effectively participate in local government meetings, it has the tendency to affect the quality of the decisions that would be made in the meeting. Again, about the effect of the poor road network on citizen participation in local governance, the 2010–2011 Vhembe District Municipality’s Annual Report “points out that one of the reasons why effective citizen participation is lacking in local governance is due to the non-existent or damaged infrastructure for roads, water, and electricity”. This indeed confirms the point that meeting venues’ proximity to participants and the nature of road networks leading to such venues is a contributing factor to citizen non-participation in local governance.

The culture or religion of some citizens can have a massive influence on their involvement and participation in local governance affairs. For example, within the Islamic faith, women are not supposed to lead or make decisions for men. This situation largely influences women’s involvement in local government decision-making processes within many Muslim-dominating MMDAs. A study conducted by Kurebwa (2013 p.16) in the Masvingo and Mashonaland central provinces of Zimbabwe found that religion and culture were ranked as the second barrier to the participation of women in local governance. Therefore, religious beliefs and the culture of the citizen at the local level have great effects on the level of citizen participation in local governance.

Socioeconomic factors such as poverty pose a serious challenge to citizen participation in local governance. The poverty levels of women affect their confidence and empowerment levels, hence they become timid and are not able to obtain the needed information that would build their confidence to participate in local governance affairs. Some local citizens who desire to contest in district-level elections in Ghana are not able to do so due to the high cost involved in campaigning,

printing of posters, and other electoral-related expenses. Although, local government elections in Ghana is free – thus, there is no filing fees. This notwithstanding, the costs involved in running district level campaigns, including the mounting of billboards makes it difficult for some people to contest the elections and be able to represent their localities at the District Assembly level where they could have the platform to properly participate in local governance. In the same study by Kurebwa (2013), it was found that the third most important factor that limits the respect and legitimacy in local governance decision-making of rural folks is their lack of economic means.

Finally, the level of illiteracy among rural folks is a key challenge to their inclusiveness and participation in local governance as well as in local government decision-making processes. Of their low level of formal education, understanding the processes and systems of the local government becomes extremely difficult for the comprehension of local citizens hindering their abilities to participate in local governance decision-making. Chiweza (2016) attributed rural folks' limited understanding and knowledge to their low education levels which do not match the level of understanding and skills required for policy deliberation and responsibilities in local governance. This situation affects the quality of meetings as well as the quality of the decisions that are made. This was also noted by the World Bank (2005) which stated that illiterate and poorly educated mothers are less able to care for their children, and low education levels limit their participation in public decision-making.

2.4.5 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

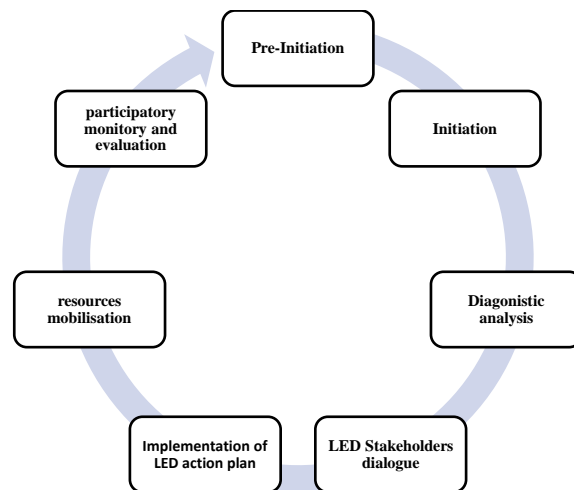
The processes involved in implementing LED are context specific. There is no one particular way or form of implementing LED projects at the local level. Sometimes, the type of project could determine the processes that play out in the implementation process. Other social factors such as time frame, location of the project, resources, and other several factors could influence the LED

project implementation process. For the purpose of this study, the discussion on LED implementation processes is centered on the works of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2014) and Yatta (2015). According to the operational manual on LED for district assemblies in Ghana (2014), LED implementation processes comprised seven (7) stages, whilst in the work of Yatta (2015), five (5) stages have been postulated as the processes via which LED implementation goes through at the district levels. The ministry of local government identifies – Pre-initiation, Initiation, Diagnostic analysis, LED stakeholder dialogue, Implementation of LED action plans, Resources mobilization, and Participatory monitoring and evaluation.

At the pre-initiation stage, the assembly leads the LED process and tries to identify all stakeholders in the LED implementation process and also define specific roles for all stakeholders. At the initiation stage, the district assembly identifies the LED priorities and is required to provide administrative, organizational and strategic leadership to the implementation process and allow the private sector to take a center stage. At the third stage of the implementation process which is the diagnostic analysis, public sensitization, education, and awareness creation about LED is the main focus of this level. In the process, the merits and demerits of LED activities are discussed among the community. The next stage is the LED stakeholder dialogue which generally involves the inclusion of LED issues into the Medium-Term Development Plan of the assembly. At this stage, once again the work shifts towards the technocrats of the assembly rather than the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The implementation stage is the next level of the process and it simply involves the execution of the adopted LED strategies and plans into actions. At this stage, total collaboration among all stakeholders in the LED implementation process is highly required. The last but one level is the stage where resources are mobilized. An attempt to identify and galvanize all local resources

becomes key. As part of this process, a partnership between other external bodies that are resourceful also comes to play as the assembly and other stakeholders reach out to them for help. Finally, the last stage involves a series of events that ensures that the outputs and outcomes of the LED project meet the objectives of the project that have been set forth in the initiation stage. This activity is carried out in a partnership manner where major players in the LED process become part of the district monitoring and evaluation team. Figure 2 below depicts the LED implementation process.

Fig 2: LED Implementation Process



Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2014). Operational Manual on Local Economic Development for District Assemblies in Ghana

In the view of Yatta (2015), the LED process involves five stages comprising an Assessment of the local economy, moving from knowledge to vision/programmes, moving from programmes to projects, LED strategy & action plan and lastly, implementation & monitoring. The local economy assessment is the first major step in the LED process, it involves measuring local wealth and the

activities generating the latter. The second phase of the process involves the definition of vision, moving from vision to objectives, and from objectives to programmes. The third level involves a movement from programs to projects which mainly involves prioritizing and selecting of projects. The main goals of the workshop are to identify programmes and projects that can contribute to the vision and objectives already agreed upon. The fourth stage involves a process in which the LED strategy is design and the action plan for LED implementation is as well developed. This process leads to the final stage of the implementation process which involves implementation and monitoring.

Considering both processes, there are some similarities and differences between the two processes of implementing LED. Both processes agree to LED planning as the first stage of the implementation process. Although, whilst the Ministry of local government refer to it as pre-initiation/initiation stage, Yatta (2015) has termed it as an assessment of the local economy. Regardless of the semantics, an analysis of the processes indicates that it is the stage where LED planning is thoroughly done. Based on the planning, then how to carry the plans out then follows in the process circle. Secondly, both school of thoughts also appreciate the point of LED implementation as a major stage in the process. This reemphasizes the point that policy implementation remains an important aspect of the public policy making circle. The key variations between the two school of thoughts has to do with the levels of resources mobilization and diagnostic analysis which stood as independent levels of the implementation process with the former school of thought but has rather been inculcated into other stages of the process with the case of the latter school of thought. An analysis of Yatta's (2015) third stage (moving from programmes to project) of the LED implementation process reveals that resource mobilization and detailed analysis of the LED strategies are undertaken at this level. However, the other process

decided to make them stand alone as independent stages of the implementation process. But most importantly, both processes could achieve the same results if properly followed.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesized literature on local economic development, women participation and local government; and made a case for the inclusion of women in LED decision making and processes. The relationship between the variables, thus, participation, LED and local governance was shown and how the variables interconnect to serve a single and better purpose. Just as the need for LED to creating employment at the local levels cannot be overemphasized, so is women participation in LED decision making and processes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STUDY AREA

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed the methodological approach adopted in undertaking the study. The research was situated in a qualitative context. Specifically, the chapter presents the research paradigm in which this study was situated, and discussed the sources of data and data collection techniques. The profile of the study area has been presented in this chapter as well. The research approach, research design, sample size and data management techniques are also discussed in this chapter. A presentation on the ethical considerations of the study concluded the chapter.

3.1 PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

The Adentan Municipal Assembly with a projected population of 111,105 is one of the 29 districts in the Greater Accra Region. Adentan is unique for its hosting of the elite population in the nation's capital and is also noted for its well-planned physical layout. Adentan, which previously had been part of the Tema Municipality assumed a full Municipal status in 2008 following the passage of LI 1888. The municipality is mainly an urban area with most of the labor force in the public sector. With a current population of 92, 831, and an estimated farmer population of 1, 855, the percentage of labour force in the agriculture sector in Adenta is estimated to be 1.99%.

According to the physical planning unit (2022), "The Municipality lies 10 kilometers to the Northeast of Accra, specifically located on latitude 5' 43' North and longitude 0' 09' west. The Municipality has a land of about 85 sq. km (33 sq miles). It shares boundaries with Kpone-Katamanso and Ashaiman Municipalities in the East, Madina / LaNkwatanang Municipality in the West, Kpone-Katamanso in the North and Madina / LaNkwatanang and Ledzokuku Krowor

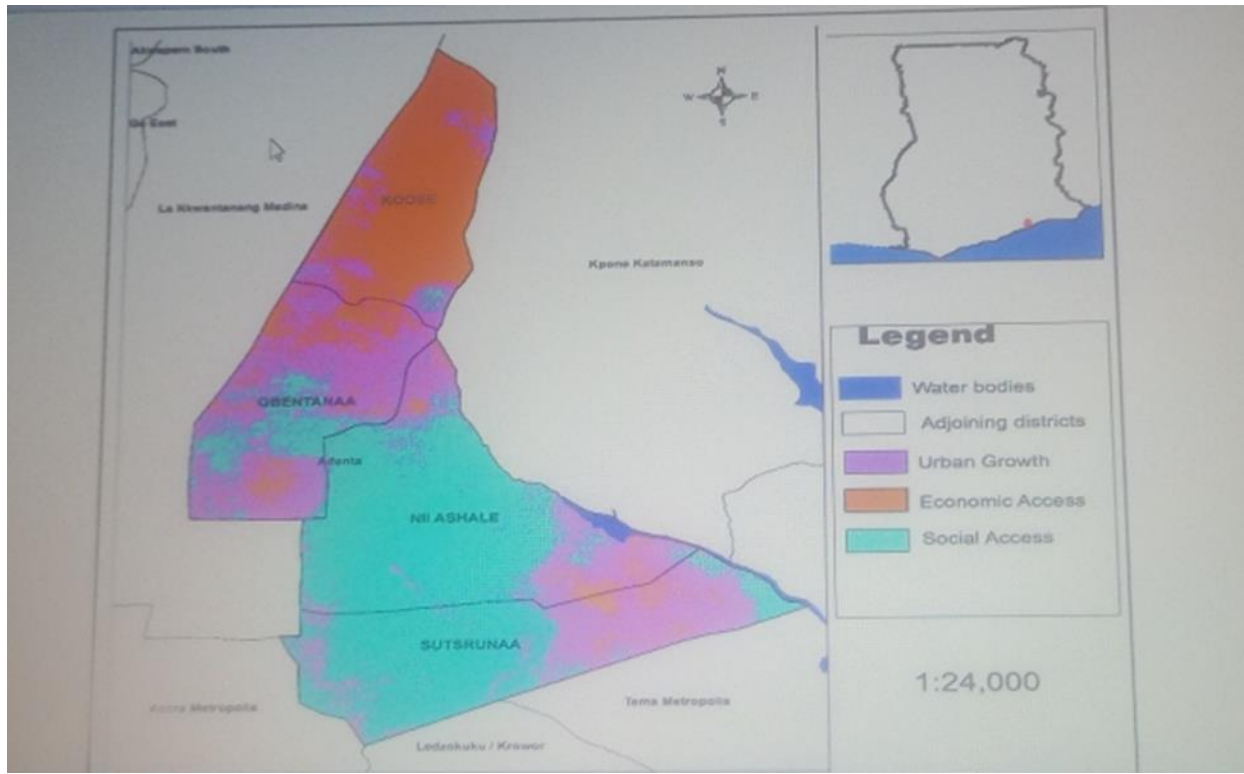
Municipalities in the south”. The municipality serves as a nodal point where the main Accra/ Aburi/ Koforidua and Accra/ Dodowa trunk roads pass.

According to data from the central administration department (2022), the municipal assembly has a general assembly membership of 18 comprising 12 elected members, 6 government appointees, 1 Member of Parliament with the municipal chief executive as the representative of the head of state at the municipal level. The general assembly has two committees which are the executive committee and public relations & complaints committee (PRCC). It has five statutory sub-committees and 6 other non-statutory sub-committees. The five are finance & administration, development planning, works sub-committee, Justice & Security and social services.

The other non-statutory sub-committees are; Women & Gender, Micro & Small Enterprise Promotion, Revenue mobilization, LED, Education and Agriculture. Of special interest to this study are the sub-committees of LED, Gender & Women and Micro & Small Enterprise Promotion. Thus, these two sub-committees have direct relations to the topic under study. Whereas the former sub-committee would be useful in soliciting data concerning women affairs within the municipality, the later would help provide the researcher with vital records on various LED programs implementation.

The municipality has four (4) zonal councils namely; “Gbentanaa, Nii Ashale, Koose and Sutsurunaa which are mandated to mobilize revenue, implement policies at the local level and also mobilise communities to participate in decision making” (adma.gov.gh). Picture 1 below depicts the physical map of the Adentan Municipal Assembly.

Picture 1. Physical Map of Adentan Municipal Assembly



Source: (adma.gov.gh, 2022).

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study explores how women participation in LED processes at the local government level can be mainstreamed within the context of the Adenta Municipality. Specifically, the study investigates how women’s participation in LED decision-making is mainstreamed at the local levels. Given the exploratory nature of the study’s objective, this study was situated in the qualitative approach, which is deemed relevant for qualitative study. In answering the research questions, the qualitative approach was employed to explore the study participants’ understanding of the participatory platforms Adenta Municipal Assembly is creating towards increasing women’s participation in LED decision-making processes. Through investigations, the qualitative research

approach was used in finding answers to the challenges associated with mainstreaming women in LED.

The choice of qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to leverage on its advantages including the following: First, the qualitative approach provided a description of how respondents differently perceive a particular research problem. It allowed for different groups of people to give an account of 42 of what they think about the research problem. Another merit of the use of qualitative methods is its ability in finding other human factors such as social norms, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be voluntarily seeming.

This study also adopted an exploratory design which was useful in gaining insight into the topic under study and provided the platform for further investigations into the research problem. In the view of Brown (2006, p.43), “exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done.” Exploratory research seeks to gather initial information that will help outline problems and propose hypotheses. The explorative design was used to draw themes from the data collected which formed the basis of analyzing the data to adequately understand. The researcher adopted two main ways of carrying out this design namely, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The key advantage of this research design is its ability to provide rich quality information that would help identify the main issues that should be addressed in this survey. According to Creswell, (2014), explorative research enables the researcher to determine the best research design, data collection methods, and selection of subjects. Besides, this design significantly reduces the research project’s level of bias and provides more credible answers to the research questions.

3.3 SOURCES OF DATA

In answering the research questions, two main sources of data comprising primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data was sourced directly from the field. It was obtained from individuals and group members who participated in answering the research questions. The primary data was collected through official documents and reports from the municipal assembly. The researcher also explored the use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussion methods in gathering the primary data. The study used primary sources for the purpose of increasing the validity, authenticity, and trustworthiness of its findings. The primary sources of data also have the potential to help the study reflect its true nature as a result of its validity. The secondary sources of data were obtained from academic articles, data from government publications, Medium Term Development Plans of the municipality, official documents from the assembly, minutes of meetings from relevant sub-committees within the assembly, and data from the municipal Business Advisory Center (BAC).

3.4 STUDY POPULATION

According to Wilson (2010), a target population is the entire set of cases from which a sample is drawn. The study categorized the respondents as follows; technocrats from the assembly, assembly members and the community women groups in LED. The technocrats comprised of the Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD), the Municipal Development Planning Officer (MDPO), the Community Development and Social Protection Officer (CDSPO), the Municipal Finance Officer (MFO), the Municipal Internal Audit Officer (MIAO), the Municipal Budget Officer (MBO), committee members on the LED sub-committee and all committee members on the BAC Sub-Committee.

The municipal coordinating director, the municipal planning officer, and the municipal BAC officer had to be part of this study because they hold a stake in the assembly in terms of LED affairs. This group of officers is usually responsible for LED coordination and governance within the assembly. Their rich knowledge of the subject matter would provide the researcher with valid information for the study.

Other technocrats were included in the study because they work together with the MCD, MDPO, and the BAC officer in implementing LED programs and other development programs of the municipalities. They perform various administrative and technical functions in LED implementation. Once an LED initiative has been approved at the general assembly level, its detailed implementation rests upon this group of technocrats. For this reason, their inclusion in the study was inevitable.

The assembly members had to be part of this study because of their roles as local-level development practitioners. As people representing various areas within the municipalities, they partake in all social and developmental issues including issues on LED implementation. They form part of the key decision-makers at the general assembly level. Some assembly members belong to the Sub-Committee on LED while some also belong to the Sub-Committee on BAC. These two committees deal with LED affairs very often and assembly members who belong to these committee's posse vital information regarding LED processes to the assembly. This makes it imperative to include them in this study in order to tap their knowledge and experience into the subject matter under investigation.

Another target group was the women groups and associations within the municipality whose activities have a direct influence on the local economy. Specifically, women in the various LED

initiatives of the municipality such as fish for life and mushroom cultivation. Other women groups such as dressmakers, and market women were purposively selected to participate in the study.

Finally, the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) and the Presiding Member (PM) were selected as well. The MCE was selected due to his direct involvement in the formulation and implementation of LED strategies in the municipalities. The presiding member was included in the study due to his in-depth information about LED initiatives within the municipalities. This is because, as a presiding member he presides over all the general assembly meetings including meetings that are held to discuss LED proposals, LED initiations, and LED implementation.

3.5 SAMPLE TECHNIQUE

Purposive sampling was the main sampling technique used for the study. According to Amponsah et. al., (2019, p.10), the “purposive sampling technique aims at targeting specific people who have a direct link to the study in the municipality.” With purposive sampling, a researcher chooses particular people within a population for the purpose of a particular study. Contrary to random studies, which intentionally comprises various cross-section of people’s ages, background, and cultures, the concept behind this sampling type is to concentrate on respondents with specific characteristics who will offer relevant inputs into the study in terms of responses to the research questions. In addition to the purposive sampling technique, the random sampling technique was partly adopted for selecting only the women groups and associations. A simple random sample method was adopted. For the purpose of random sampling, five women were simply randomly selected from each of the four zonal councils within the municipality bringing their number to twenty women. The essence of the groupings was to make it easy for the researcher to select twenty women from amongst a large number of women groups and associations. The reason for using

random sampling to complement purposive sampling was to increase the research validity since community members could not have been purposively selected.

3.6 SAMPLE SIZE

In all, sixty-five (65) respondents were targeted for the study among the five (5) categories of respondents. This targeted number was chosen because the method of data collection was mainly in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. According to Creswell (2014), a sample size of 20 to 30 is recommended for in-depth interviews in qualitative research. However, the researcher was able to collect data from forty-seven (47) respondents out of the targeted Sixty-five (65).

The sample size was selected according to the categories of the target population discussed above. The municipal chief executive and presiding member were selected because they are directly involved in making decisions that touch on LED issues. Also, being the political head (MCE) within the municipality, he was in the position to provide the researcher with vital information about LED execution that was useful to the study. At the local level, assembly members are directly involved in LED program implementation, this makes their inclusion in the study compulsory. They possess valid information about previous LED processes that occurred in the assembly. This can help them make valid inputs into how women's participation in LED can be mainstream in the assembly. Twenty-Five (25) assembly members and Twenty (20) technocrats were targeted.

As such, the selection of the research sample was done by the researcher using his own judgment. The criteria for the selection of the study participants were different depending on the category the participant belonged to. Ten (10) elected assembly members participated in the study with five (5) appointee assembly members. The criteria used in arriving at the fifteen (15) assembly members was to target at least 50% of both elected and appointed assembly members. Considering their total number, a target of fifteen could guarantee the 50% target. In respect of the technocrats, the

criteria were to select people whose official duties has a direct or indirect relation with LED. In this respect, technocrats who are serving on both Business Advisory Center and LED sub-committees were targeted. Of course, technocrats from the central administration unit (Director, Deputy Director & Assistant Directors) who participated in the district LED affairs were also targeted. This same criterion applied to the development planning officer and some departmental heads such as the district finance officer who are influential when it comes to LED implementation. Table 2 below summarizes a breakdown of respondents per each category of the target population prior to data collection.

Table 2. Categories of respondents and the number of respondents.

Category of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Representatives from selected women's groups and associations in the municipality	20
Technocrats	10
Assembly members	15
Municipal chief executive	1
Presiding member	1
Total	47

Source: Authors construct, 2022.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher employed in-depth interview in collecting data for the study. The interview was based on an interview guide, which contained questions for respondents. The questions were formulated and modified to suit the abilities of the respondents. The questions were also designed in accordance with the objectives of the study. All participants were either interviewed in their

homes or offices. Participants were also allowed to provide their perception on how to mainstream women participation into LED processes within the assembly. Interviews took place between July, 2022 – September, 2022 and most interviews lasted for more than 35 minutes. A recording device and a field note book was used to capture the salient points alongside the face-to-face interview sessions.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher used open-ended questions to allow flexibility in the responses. The interview guide was used to take data from the technocrats and assembly members. The rationale for adopting this in-depth interview was to obtain in-depth information from elected representative and technocrats given their experience and wide knowledge about the workings of the local government system. Another data collection technique which was used is focus group discussions; this was used to take data from the representatives of various women groups and associations. Four (4) focused group discussions were conducted by the researcher. The focus groups discussions allowed for a wider variety of perspectives within a shorter period of time.

3.8 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Data collection was simultaneously done with data analysis which is encouraged in qualitative data analysis (Boateng, 2018). Data collected was transcribed, sorted and arranged into different types depending upon the source of information collected. Data was then coded based on the emerging information collected from study participants. According to Creswell (2014, p.198), “coding involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences, paragraphs or images into categories and labelling those categories with a term”. The codes were then used to generate themes which appeared as the main findings of this study. Finally, an interpretation of the data was done and the researcher suggested in which cases the findings of

the study either confirmed past literature or diverge from it. In so doing, data was manually reviewed and relevant conclusions drawn in respect of the research questions. Literature was further reviewed, where findings from previous related studies were cited to either confirm the findings of this study or indicate the differences between this study finding and that of previous related studies.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The researcher adhered to the following ethical standards in conducting this study: First, the researcher sought the consent of respondents in data collection. This was achieved through offering an explanation to the study participants about the purpose of the study. Second, in terms of data reporting, the researcher anonymized the identity of respondents. Respondents also had the option to pull out from the study at any point. Participants were assured their response was solely going to serve the purpose of the study and nothing else. Besides, no one was deceived, misled or coerced to take part in the research. An introductory letter was given to each participant before any interview was conducted. This was done to give the respondents a further confirmation that their responses were solely going to serve the purpose of this research. Lastly, the researcher referenced and acknowledge all secondary information that is used in this study which will prevent any issues of plagiarism.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis, findings, and discussions of the findings in line with the three objectives of the study as follows; (A) To examine how existing municipal participation mechanisms enable meaningful women participation in LED processes and decision-making. (B) To investigate how women's participation in LED processes and decision-making at the local government level is mainstream. (C) To explore the challenges of mainstreaming women's participation in LED processes and decision-making at the local government level.

Analyzing the LED action plan of the municipality revealed that, the main LED initiatives included training sections toward capacity building. The municipal assembly in conjunction with the BAC and the District Agric office implemented a number of programs that target women's inclusion in LED. The municipality also initiated and implemented what they termed the local government capacity support fund through which start-up capitals were provided to some market women within the municipality to boost the local economy. The enrollment of the program commenced with One Hundred and Fifty (150) women who received the funds as loans from the municipal assembly. The source of funding for implementing these activities was largely internally generated funds by the municipality. The DACF was barely used in supporting LED activities within the district. In the same vein, no allocation was made directly from the DACF to support LED in the municipality. Table three (3) below depicts some LED activities undertaken by the Adenta Municipal Assembly.

Table 3: Some LED Activities Undertaken by AdMA

NO	ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED COST(GH¢)	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1.	Organize a One (1) Day of Vocational and Managerial Skills Training for 100 PWDs by Dec. 2021.	GHC 4,360.00	GoG/DACF
2.	Organize and train women for vegetable farming	GHC 5040.00	IGF
3.	Organize the graduation of 10 women enrolled in the ‘Youth in Dressmaking Project’.	GHC 3,000.00	IGF
4.	Organize and train women for mushroom farming	GHC 800. 00	IGF
5.	2-Day Training in Fabric Fan Works for Cultural Group Members in the Municipality	GHC 3, 040.00	IGF
6.	2-Day Training in Beads Making for Visuals Artists in the Municipality	3,140.00	IGF
7.	Organize One Day Training Programme for 60 Co-Operative SME Executives on the Topic: Co-Operative Managerial Skills by April 2021	1,448.00	IGF

8.	Organize One Day Capacity Building Programme for 60 Society Executives and Other Members on the Topic: Co-Operative Booking and Accounting by July, 2021	1,448.00	IGF
9.	Organize One Day Workshop for 60 Women Co-Operative Society SME Executives on the Topic: Co-Operative Conflict Management by November, 2021.	1,448.00	IGF
10.	Organization of 1no. technical improvement in product and packaging workshop by Dec. 2020	2,720.00	IGF

Source: AdMA – BAC office, September 2022

4.1 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AND DECISION-MAKING AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

The findings of the study emerged that Adentan municipal assembly has three (3) main participatory mechanisms that support women’s participation in LED processes and decision-making. These include; the district LED Sub-committee, the local LED sub-committee, and the LED budgeting forum.

4.1.1 District LED Sub-Committee

It emerged that the Adentan Municipal assembly has a sub-committee in charge of LED affairs comprising six women and 5 men. With this committee, the assembly purposefully include women in the membership of the LED sub-committee in other to promote their participation in decision-making. In most cases, to ensure women's fair inclusion in LED decision-making and processes at the assembly level, the LED sub-committee is deliberately constituted with more women than men. This composition guarantees more women input into the LED decision-making process which is then submitted to the District Planning Coordinating Unit (DPCU) secretariat. The DPCU validates and approves of the plan then incorporates the activities into the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). Moreover, to totally ensure women participation in the decision-making processes of the assembly, women are again purposefully selected to participate in the preparation of MTDP and Annual Action Plan (AAP) and at various stages of the plan implementation. Concerning this, the sub-committee chairman for LED shares her view in the following statements;

“When it comes to LED decision making in the assembly, I think women are fairly represented. Not just our representation, but also our participation and contribution into LED decision-making process. At the sub-committee level, women are given the opportunity to deliberate on various LED proposals and arrive at meaningful conclusions without any interference. These agreed decisions become part of the MTDPs and the AAPs of the assembly”.

The LED sub-committee mechanism of participation is similar to what Arnstein (1996) categorized as citizen power. It is the most desirable form of community participation where participants decide on issues that matter to them and influence decisions that affect their livelihood.

This is a stage, where women participants in the LED process receive maximum feasible involvement and substantial control on issues that determine LED implementation within the municipality. With the district LED sub-committee, it does not only provide women the opportunity to be represented in LED decision-making processes, it actually accords them the platform to fully and effectively participate in the decision-making process. Table 4 below shows the number of men and women who participated in LED affairs through the LED sub-committee meetings for the year 2022 on quarterly basis.

Table 4. Number of Men and Women who participated in the district LED decision making through the District LED sub-committee on quarterly basis.

GENDER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUATER	4TH QUARTER
MEN	5	3	4	5
WOMEN	6	5	6	6

Source: District LED sub-committee report of 2022

The district LED sub-committee practically provided a huge platform for women assembly members to be part of LED decision-making process of the assembly. This is in line with the local governance Act 2016 (Act 936 section 23 [1] f) which provides for district assemblies to constitute other sub-committees that the assembly determines fit to help in the administration of the district. To this extent, the establishment of the district LED sub-committee provided a meaningful participatory platform for women to actively contribute towards LED processes and decision-making in the district. These findings relate to the assertion by the ILO (2010, p.4) where it was affirmed that “a participatory approach such as LED requires not only a balanced representation of women and men participating in the process, but the creation of conditions in which opinions

of all participants are freely voiced and defended”. The platform also provided an opportunity for participatory planning where women on the sub-committee are regularly involved in the planning of LED affairs.

4.1.2 Local LED Committees

The findings of this study also revealed that the local LED committees was another participatory platform through which women within the Adentan municipality participated in LED processes and decision-making. It emerged that women groups in the municipality such as women in vegetable farming groups, women cooperative societies, tailor’s associations, and market women were brought together to form local LED committees. During the preparation of the MTDP, these women’s groups and associations are met for their needs assessment in respect of the local economy. These meetings normally take the form of town hall meetings and public hearings. Such needs could include capacity-building training, start-up capital, management training, and other LED-related needs/activities. These needs are ranked after which the DPCU validates these needs. The various departments/unit subsequently spread the needs for the plan period. So, in preparing the annual action plan, the Assembly extracts the activities from the MTDP and submits them to the DPCU for validation. About this, the queen mother of the vegetable farming association shares her views as follows;

“Officials from the assembly usually come to meet us and ask us questions concerning our vegetable farming activities. We share with them the processes involved in farming, the challenges we are encountering and how we would want the district to support us. Assurance is usually given to us that our concerns would be forwarded to the appropriate quateres at the district. In some cases, they came back to support us, but it took a long time

for us to receive such support. The recent support we received from the assembly was short loans.”

Yatta (2015), observed that, the local LED committees serve as advisory bodies with representatives of key local organizations and other local actors, the committees also included municipal council members as well as local authorities from hinterland. This participatory forum emerged as the only form through which local women are involved in the district LED processes and decision-making. The various women groups provided an opportunity for authorities of the assembly to reach out to their target population with ease. Without such women’s associations and groups, bringing on board the ideas of women about the local economy would have proven difficult for the assembly. The local LED committee was perhaps the only way of contacting the majority of women in the local economy.

Notwithstanding the fact that the local LED committees served as the only avenue through which local women participated in the LED process, that system seems questionable as an effective meaningful way of mainstreaming women into the district LED decision-making process. Thus, it does not guarantee the full participation of women in the LED processes and decision-making of the assembly. This is because the formation of local LED committees is very similar to the quota system where a quota is given to the women groups in the district to appoint their members who then form part of the district LED decision-making body. The point, therefore, is that there is a difference between women’s representation in LED processes & decision-making and their active participation in the process. Appointment and quota systems could be used to address the issue of numerical differences, but may not be a meaningful way of mainstreaming women into the district LED process and decision making. A study by Branya et.al. (2015), affirm that affirmative action would address the problem of numbers but would not result in sustainable improvements in the

representation of women in local governance. This suggests that providing the opportunity for representatives of women groups to partake in the district LED process may not necessarily guarantee their meaningful participation in the process.

4.1.3 Gender-responsive budgeting forum

Another participatory mechanism that supported women's participation in LED decision-making and processes within the municipality is the gender-responsive budgeting forum. Through the local LED committees, authorities of the assembly involve women in the various stages of the district budget process. The first is to identify and meet women engaged in the various LED programs within the district through the local LED committees. LED consultative forums or public hearings are organized where women's decisions are taken into account in the budget process. The district is of the view that giving women the opportunity to participate in making decisions concerning the use of financial and other resources of the district is a major way of empowering the women as well as ensuring their mainstreaming into the local governance system. Concerning this, the municipal budget office intimates as follows'

"In this process, we hear them and they hear us too. We ask them about their challenges, how their LED programs are doing and what they want us to budget for. We listen to their opinions about how the local economy is doing and then take all their views. Now because their inputs have already been taken during the planning stage, their inputs then form the basis for the expenditure side of the budget".

The ILO (2010, p.5) noted that in the context of LED "it is necessary to analyze the impacts of existing budgets and their underlying policies on men and women to assess whether they are reducing inequalities or increasing and perpetuating them". Table 5 below is a representation of how men and women participated at various stages of the district budgeting process.

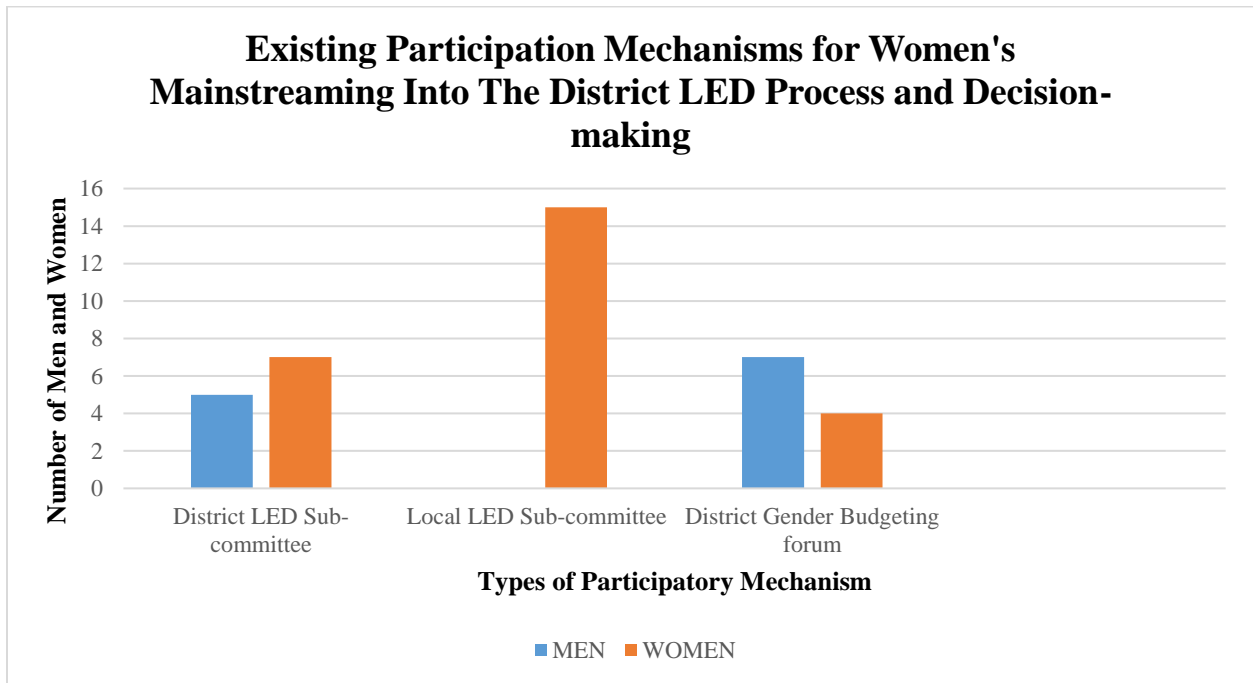
Table 5. Men and Women Representation in district budgeting process.

District Gender Responsive Budgeting Process			
GENDER	Planning	Preparation	Implementation
Men	5	5	6
Women	4	4	3

Source: AdMA budget unit – 2022

With this LED participatory approach, officials from the assembly meet the local LED committees during budgeting implementation to inspect the expenditure trends/patterns of the budget to ensure gender-equitable LED. At this stage, the interest of the local LED committee is to ensure that spending is in line with budget items that are pro-women related. This is done to ensure that local development benefits men and women equally through available economic opportunities, at the same time, ensuring that women are not sidelined in terms of economic/resource decision-making within the district on the basis of their sex or other social factors. Gender responsive budgeting really provided the opportunity for women to be part of decision-making processes concerning the disbursement and use of resources especially for LED activities.

Graph 1 below shows a summary of the pattern of representation of men and women in the three LED existing participatory mechanisms of the assembly.



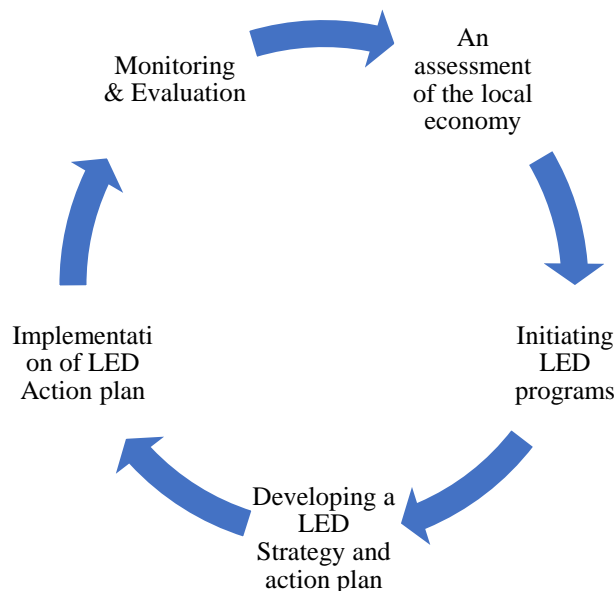
Source: Author’s construct based on the field data – December, 2022.

From the graph above, women participated more in the local LED sub-committees with 100% representation over men. Women also dominated in the district LED sub-committees but with a low representation over men in the district gender budgeting forum. It is worth noting that, the type of participation in respect of the other two mechanisms of participation is more effective than the local LED sub-committee. With the local LED sub-committees, the form of participation is that of representation, but the district LED committees and the district budgeting forum offer real opportunity for women participation in the LED process and decision making.

4.2 MAINSTREAMING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND DECISION-MAKING AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

It emerged that the Adenta Municipal Assembly does not have a single way of mainstreaming women’s participation in LED process and decision making. However, different LED activities determine how women in LED within the municipality could be mainstreamed into the LED process. This notwithstanding, it was found that the municipal authorities mostly mainstreamed women’s participation into LED through the following steps: an assessment of the local economy, initiation of LED program, development of a LED strategy & action plan, implementation of LED strategy & action plan and monitoring & evaluation. Diagram 2 below illustrates the district LED mainstreaming process.

Diagram 2. District LED Mainstreaming process



Source: Author's construct based on field data – December, 2022.

4.2.1 Assessing The Local Economy

Study findings revealed that, the assembly attempts to assess the local economy by first gaining an understanding of the economy and measuring local wealth such as production and capital as well as activities that are generating the local wealth. Attempts to mainstream women into this process comes in the form of public hearings and district meetings with the women in LED through the local LED committees and the district LED sub-committee. At this stage, the municipal authorities allow women who are part of the local LED committees and capable; to analyze the various available community strategies, community plans and all-important local documents in order to identify conducive environment for LED. The objective of this stage is to acquire knowledge about the local economy and the resources available for economic and social development. About this, a woman on the district LED sub-committee share her view in the following statements;

“We will want to understand the local economy first. We identify women who are into LED within the local economy, identify the aspect of local economy in which they play – be it in agriculture, trade, manufacturing or other aspects of the economy and then we also try to understand why the women are in that part of the economy. This help us successful analysis the local environment.”

According to Bayer (2003, p.13), “during these stages of strategy development, it is important to have a clear leader from the local government who galvanizes the effort and determines the degree of participation of stakeholders. As planning becomes more detailed and also during implementation, however, the stakeholders must transform their relationships into partnerships”. Findings also indicated that in understanding the local economy, sometimes authorities of the

assembly rely on data from the district statistical office. There is also an analysis of existing situations and a compilation of the district profile to obtain relevant data for LED implementation. At this stage, there is an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the local economy.

4.2.2 Initiation of LED Programs

At this stage the assembly identifies all stakeholders in LED within the municipality which women belong to and attempts to define their respective roles. This is usually done to be able to figure out what role women could best champion in the LED process. At the initiation stage, the LED process involves planning, stakeholder engagements and brainstorming sections to identify LED priorities. To ensure that women are mainstream into the process, the council authorities involve women in each of these important activities within the initiation stage. However, with respect to other stakeholders in the LED process such as NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and the private sector, the assembly do not influence how they mainstream women participation at the initiation stage. But such partners in LED implementation are mostly advice by the assembly to include women in their LED initiation stage for the purposes of community ownership and sustainability. Concerning this, the district development planning officer shares his view in the following statement,

“At this point local resources are mobilized for the commencement of the LED process. Besides, the District Assembly provides strategic leadership for LED programs within its jurisdiction and thus, mainstream women into the various activities that occurs at this stage”.

For Metaxas (2010, p.50), at this stage, “in order to support the Local Authorities Institutions and the effectiveness of developmental policies to exist, cooperation of the municipalities and local business should be encouraged with the business community as well as with other institutional

structures”. At this point, the District Assembly will be providing other stakeholders in LED implementation within the district the enabling space to play a role in the initiation phase. The purpose of this stage is to create awareness among key stakeholders in LED; define and assign roles and responsibilities; identify LED priorities and attempt to constitute LED implementation committees. District Assemblies are to lead the initiation process, thereby ensuring they carry along all the stakeholders.

4.2.3 Developing A LED Strategy and Action Plan

In developing a LED strategy and action plan, the various LED committees and other stakeholders meet with the identified resource persons to dialogue on what to plan and what to prioritize. Following the dialogue, a draft of strategies and plans are developed. Upon a SWOT analysis, some projects are prioritized over others leading to a synchronization of the prioritized ones to come out with a final draft of the LED strategy and action plan. At this stage, women are mainstream into this process through their representation on the district LED sub-committee and the local LED committee. They actively participate in reviewing the SWOT analysis leading to the finalization of the draft strategy and action plan. Women are also actively engaged in the identification of goals, objectives, strategies and programs which could form part of the final LED strategy and action plan. With respect to this, a member on the district LED sub-committee alluded that,

“at the LED sub-committee meetings, we basically do an amylase of all potential LED programs on the floor and rank them based on their potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. LED projects that score high on opportunities and strengths but low in terms of threats and weaknesses forms part of the action plan. Based on this, I can

confidently say that women are involve in the LED action planning as well as decisions that leads to developing the action plan.”

This exercise conforms with the finding of Swinburn, Goga & Murphy (2006) that, to build a strong local economy, good practice proves that each community should undertake a collaborative process to understand the nature and structure of the local economy, and conduct analysis of the area’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The main goals of the dialogue are to identify programs and projects that can contribute to the vision and objectives already agreed upon. This is followed by clarifying the mechanism as well as the criteria by which new projects can be elaborated, evaluated and adopted in the future.

4.2.4 Implementation of LED Action Plan

It emerged that, another major way of mainstreaming women into the district LED process is during LED activities implementation. Once an LED strategy and action plan has been developed, programs and projects are selected at that point and LED project implementation can start. At this stage, mainstreaming women into the LED process could be in two folds. First, involving women in the implementation planning level and second involving women in the actual implementation process of the LED strategy. LED projects that are initiated by the municipal assembly could involve women in both the planning and detail implementation of the LED action plan. But LED projects initiated by other stakeholders/participants (NGOs, CSOs, CBOs) do not necessarily make provision for women mainstreaming, especially at the point of planning the implementation process. A woman on the district LED sub-committee laments that,

“with the other partners in LED implementation, women are mostly involved in the detail execution of the LED strategy and action plan. Decisions leading to the development of the

strategy and action plans are reserved for the management/technical teams of these participants to make”.

However, it emerged that if by chance, some women happened to be part of the technical/management teams of these partners (CSOs, CBOs, NGOs) in LED, then they are represented in the decision-making aspect of implementation. Nevertheless, such a representation is only a coincidence of the fact that these women are part of the management teams of their organizations. It does not properly make the case for women mainstreaming into LED by these organizations.

4.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

In mainstreaming women participation into LED decision making and process, the final stage normally adopted by Adenta municipal assembly is the monitoring and evaluation stage. This final stage of the LED process involves measuring the results and impacts of the district LED committees against developing LED strategies and action plans. At this stage, mainstreaming women into the process entails an engagement of the district LED sub-committee, the local LED committee, and technical officials of the assembly to ensure that projects implementation is done according to the approved implementation plan, which in turn is based on the action plan of individual LED projects. Women at this stage have to point out where there are deviations from the approved LED strategy and action plan. Lastly, evaluation climaxes the mainstreaming process where women in the LED process are engaged in conducting a performance review of all approved activities to ensure that LED project outputs/outcomes are in line with the objectives set forth in the approved LED strategy and action plan. Table 6 below illustrate men and women participation at various stages of the district LED mainstreaming process that was adopted to implement an LED initiative in the district dubbed “FISH FOR LIFE”.

Table 6: Men and Women Participation in the District LED Mainstreaming Process

Stages of District LED Mainstreaming	Number of Men participants in the stage	Number of Women participants in the stage
An assessment of the local economy	7	9
Initiating LED programs	5	9
Developing an LED strategy and action plan	11	7
Implementation of LED action plan	13	17
Monitoring and evaluation	5	3

Source: AdMA Development planning unit – 2022.

FISH FOR LIFE is an LED initiative implemented within the Adenta municipality that attempts to mainstream women into the implementation process, the above stages as indicated in the table were adopted. The table shows the number of men and women who were involved and participated at each stage of the mainstreaming process. The data shows that, in summation more women participated in the process than men even though there were very few women during the monitoring and evaluation stage.

4.3 CHALLENGES IN MAINSTREAMING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AND DECISION-MAKING AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

The study findings reveal that women mainstreaming into the LED process at the Adenta municipal assembly is not problem free. It emerged that challenges such as improper LED governance & coordination, the absence of a district LED strategy, the inability of the district to initiate LED activities for the women, time constraints on the part of the women, and resource challenges to facilitate women mainstreaming into the LED process were some impediments against the assembly in their quest to mainstream women into the district’s LED decision making and action planning.

4.3.1 Improper LED Governance and Coordination

Findings from this study depict that, LED governance and coordination is a critical factor for which it is difficult for women to be mainstreamed into the district LED process. A further question of how revealed that, there are no LED institutions or structures at the district assembly level. The municipal assembly does not have an office for LED likewise there are no specific roles postulating how women mainstreaming in LED should be carried out. Besides, no specific directives require MMDAs to mainstream women’s participation in LED even though MMDAs are encouraged to do so since LED implementation is a participatory approach involving many stakeholders at the local levels. For this reason, it makes it difficult for the assembly to figure out how to involve women in various levels/stages of the LED process since LED strategies are not one-size-fits-all. Concerning this, the district Business Advisory Center officer intimates that

“the municipality lacks an LED coordinating center/unit. To mainstream women in LED means to include women in all aspects of the LED process. The easiest way out is to have

a LED governance and coordinating center where all stakeholders involve in LED interplay. At that point, involving women will be very easy since all the LED players are present.”

It is argued by several analysts that LED is not taken seriously by many local governments and instead relegated to a backroom function or minor issue on the agenda with no political importance (Murray, 2007; Nel, 2009). In addition to the view of the BAC officer is the fact that the municipality lacks a central coordinating point where activities of the local businesses, NGOs, and other stakeholders in LED implementation are coordinated. In addition to this, there are no proper coordination channels for LED implementation that could allow for women mainstreaming into the process.

4.3.2 Lack of Capacity and A District LED Strategy

It emerged that the complete absence of a District LED strategy partly accounts for the district's inability to mainstream women into the LED process and decision-making. The municipality does not have a formal LED strategy that would stipulate in detail its LED approach and processes. Besides, the district is constrained in terms of capacity which accounts for its inability to design and own an LED strategy. In terms of capacity, the district does not have the requisite human resources who are in charge of LED affairs. The issues of LED are left for the district development planning officer and the district coordinating directors to handle. These people are not specialists in LED issues nor were they trained in LED affairs. They have to combine their primary duties and responsibilities at the assembly together with LED affairs. Since LED is not their focus or specialized field, they are not able to adequately deal with all the issues in the sub-filed, hence their inability to develop a LED strategy that could have made provisions for women

mainstreaming in LED decision-making and action planning. On this account, an assistant coordinating director has this to say

“We are yet to put up a district LED strategy. Regardless of this, we ensure that in developing our medium-term development plans, we develop LED action plans that make provision for women mainstreaming and incorporate it into the MTDPs.”

The business advisory center officer also intimates that;

“Regarding the human resources for LED implementation, the assembly do not have specific officers for LED affairs. Officers who are assigned to LED affairs lack some form of technical knowledge or educational background related to LED and use their common knowledge in steering LED affairs. The difficulty is that many of the officers assigned to LED affairs have their core duties and therefore take up the roles of LED as additional ones which do not make them effectively discharge such duties”.

Due to the lack of LED experts at the district level, “Most District Officers view gender mainstreaming in LED plans, implementation and reporting as the task of the Officer in charge of gender and family promotion” (Rutaremara, 2018 p.44). For Rogerson (2009), only rarely is LED located in its own department often operating within a wider unit such as planning and community services. Nel (2009) then concluded that the practice of LED in many MMDAs either becomes a dumping ground for unproductive local government officials or a stepping stone for the competent ones due to challenged career prospects. A district LED strategy developed by authorities of the district has the possibility of making adequate provisions for women’s inclusion at various levels/stages of the LED process. The inability of the municipality to develop and adopt a LED

strategy for the district implies that appropriate participatory mechanisms for women mainstreaming in LED activities cannot be properly taken care of by the district.

4.3.3 Time Constraints On the Part of Women in LED

The lack of satellite or linking markets for the women to deploy their local products into such markets limited their participation in LED. This results in a reduction in the number of women who would have been actively engaged in LED within the municipality. For the want of satellite markets within the municipality, the participation of women in LED within the municipality is limited which results in limiting the number of women available for LED mainstreaming at the district level. A deputy coordinating director shares her view on this issue in the following statements...

“To effectively mainstream women in the district LED process and decision-making requires that more women are engaged in different LED activities within the district. With that situation, authorities are able to select women from a poll of different economic activities and collate their different ideas into the mainstreaming process”.

The study findings revealed that the lack of satellite markets within the municipality is generally attributed to the lack of land to create sufficient markets within the municipality. Because the municipality is found within the city of Accra, there is scarcity of land for social developments such as the construction of markets. This makes it challenging for the municipality to create sufficient markets which in turn affects the local economy by making it uncompetitive.

4.3.4 Resource Constraints to Facilitate Women's Involvement in LED Affairs

Mainstreaming women's participation in LED is not cost-free. It requires some form of resources to cater for their proper involvement in the process which could lead to their mainstreaming. Women in various LED affairs within the municipality must be invited by the municipality to attend LED meetings and engagement at the assembly level to ensure that their views and opinions are heard by the municipal authorities and factored into the main LED decisions of the municipality. This comes with some financial cost as these women have to be given stipe-off as their transport allowances as well as taking care of their lunch or snacks. The municipality is mostly financially constrained when it comes to funding such expenses. Concerning this, the municipal coordinating director narrates that

“financial constraint has always been a major issue when it comes to LED affairs within the municipality. Our DACF is mostly overburdened with other developmental projects leaving us with no option but to always rely on our IGF to fund many LED-related expenses we engage in. This challenges our capability to regularly involve various women groups leaders who are into LED affairs in all our LED meetings/engagements.”

Regerson (2009) attributed the lack of resources for LED implementation to result of a lack of understanding of the importance of LED as well as of what can be done and general pessimism around the limited successes observed in LED especially in small towns.

Besides the main issues that confront the municipal assembly in mainstreaming women's participation in the LED process and decision-making, the study also uncovered other challenges that confronted the local women in terms of their participation in LED. These challenges partly explain the difficulty in having to mainstream women into the district LED process and decision-making. Among other problems, the lack of time, difficulties in registering local businesses, and

financial constraints were the major impediments to local women's participation in the LED process.

Women in LED activities within the municipality have constantly demonstrated the want of time to effectively honor the invitation by the municipal assembly to be part of the LED process and discussions at the assembly level. Women spend more time on the various LED activities they engage in than being involved in sharing ideas with the municipality on how to mainstream them into the LED process of the district. Women within the municipality preferred spending time attending training programs and workshops on LED that provide them with technical training on how to improve upon their LED activities. Issues about their participation in mainstreaming at the municipality level are not of special interest to them. A woman shares her views about this

“I have never attended any meeting at the assembly for LED discussions, instead I attended pieces of training at the assembly on LED. Rather, our group leaders represent us in the various meetings at the assembly level. For me, my focus is on my business and how to make a profit by overcoming the challenges that confront my business.”

The municipal development planning officer also shares his view on this

“women in various LED activities felt reluctant to honor our invitation for discussing their mainstreaming into the LED process, and various attempts to encourage them towards this path have proven vital. Serving them meeting invitation letters way ahead of time, and regular and constant reminders sent to them about the meeting have all not yielded the desired results.

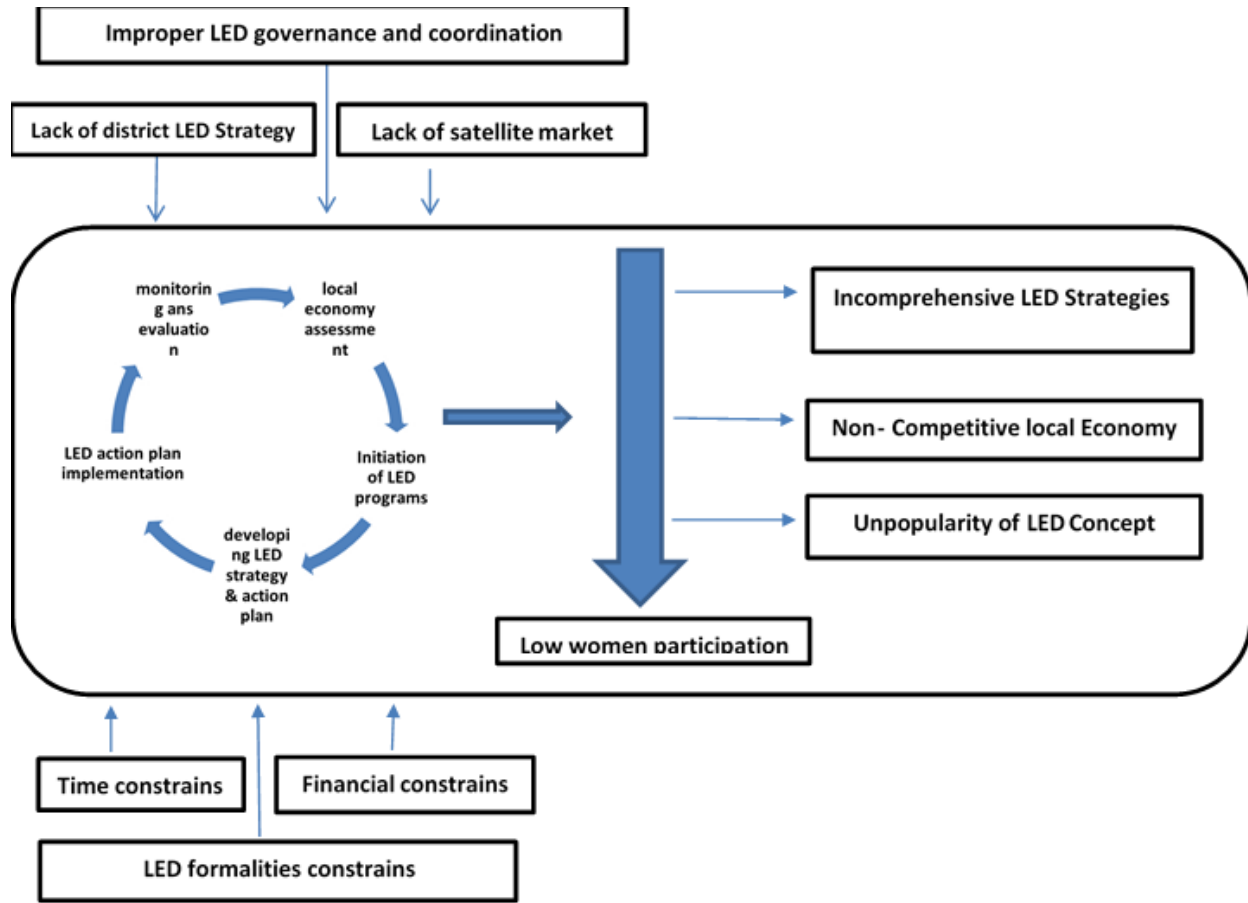
Besides, women explained the difficulties they encounter in trying to register or formalize their LED businesses. Women in fish farming who needed business registration certificates, as well as

the foods and drugs board's (FDB) certification, were faced with excessive bureaucracy. For some women, several attempts to acquire the FDB certificates have not yielded any results. This affected their businesses and discouraged other women from desiring to engage in LED within the municipality. In the long run, they lose trust in the municipal assembly's ability to be able to support them in that respect and therefore do not make themselves available for the district authorities to engage them in any LED discussions. This affects the authority's efforts in trying to mainstream women's participation in LED within the district.

Finally, it emerged that difficulties in sourcing finance for LED activities was another serious challenge that confronted women within the municipality and limited their capabilities to effectively engage in LED implementation. If women do not engage in LED activities, there is no way the district could formalize their mainstreaming into the LED process. Women need to be involved in LED affairs first before they could be mainstreamed into the LED process by the assembly. The main sources of funding identified in this study were; loans, plunging back profit, NGO support, and MASLOC support on very few occasions. Women's inability to source funding for their LED activities has been a serious challenge limiting a good number of women from involving in LED. This situation does not create a favorable economic environment that would allow many women to be engaged in the local economy. As few women participate in LED within the district, fewer women are available for LED engagements and mainstreaming by the district.

Fig 2 below demonstrates how the combined challenges of mainstreaming women into the district decision affects the practice, promotion and development of LED.

Fig 2. Challenges and effects of women mainstreaming in LED



Source: Author’s construct – 2022

From the figure above, when the challenges that confronts the municipality in their attempts to mainstream women in LED process and decision making add up to those challenges that confronts local women in the same attempt, the major resulting effect is that it leads to a low representation and participation of women in LED within the municipality. By extension, the low participation of women in LED results into other major issues such as the development of incomprehensive LED strategies by the municipality, it also contributes to the unpopular nature of the concept and could also make the local economy very uncompetitive.

4.4 DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The existing participatory mechanisms that enable women's meaningful participation in LED process and decision-making within the assembly are LED Sub-Committees, local LED committees, and gender responsive budgeting forums. Generally, the District has no comprehensive participatory channels for women's participation in the district LED decision-making process. This is because existing participatory mechanisms for mainstreaming women into the district LED process are the same as those provided by the various local government laws which established citizen participation in the local governance system. These laws do not specifically outline any procedure(s) for involving women's participation in LED. Although, this study found similar mechanisms for women's participation in LED as those identified in the literature, by virtue of the fact that the same participatory mediums that are provided for women to participate in local governance decision-making are equally employed by the assembly in their quest to mainstream women into the district LED process and decision making.

The local LED committees provided an opportunity for women who are into various LED activities to participate in the district LED decision-making process. The assembly found this approach as the ideal way of involving community women in the process. Through this forum, the views and opinions of many women within the district were solicited by the assembly and formed the basis of many LED decisions. This finding differed from that of Amponsah et al., (2019) who found that some district assemblies created Women in Development sub-committees as part of the efforts to engender institutions. Women in development subcommittees might have broader aims which could include local economic development and the protection of women's rights against gender discrimination in district development. However, the prime purpose of the committees found by

this study was to encourage women mainstreaming and participation in LED decision making. This makes it different from the findings of previous study by Amponsah et al., (2019).

For instance, the local government Act 1993 (Act 462), mandates all MMDAs to constitute sub-committees for the administration of their works. These sub-committees serve as major decision-making channels within the local governance process. By extension, the sub-committees also serve as major participatory channels for women in decision-making at that level. The findings of this study have shown that women in LED decision-making processes employ these same channels of participation. However, few women are able to win local-level elections and get to be part of the district LED committee or district budget committee. This suggest that the sub-committee system cannot be considered a meaningful way through which women participate in the district LED processes and decision-making since there is a condition of either having to win local-level elections or to be appointed before a woman can be part of these committees. Hence, in the current circumstances, the committee system cannot be said to be a meaningful way of mainstreaming women to participate in the district LED processes and decision-making.

Subsequently, the gender responsive budgeting approach also provided a platform for women meaningful participation and their mainstreaming into LED decision making at the district level. This finding is similar to that of Uddin (2019, p. 50), who found that “open budget meeting is one of the platforms at the grassroots for ensuring participatory planning and a vehicle for effective participation of the women, vulnerable, and voiceless”. Through the gender-responsive budgeting, authorities were able to assess and understand the relative benefit that men and women derive from various LED development projects. For Hosein, Basdeo-Gobin and Gény (2020, p.40), “the application of gender responsive budgeting approach in all phases of the budget cycle processes is critical to effective gender mainstreaming”. In affirmation to this study’s findings, McNulty (2015)

found that women's participation in budgeting specifically can improve participatory budget outcomes. Indeed, the participation of women representatives in budgeting improved the budgeting process. However, women involvement in the district budget preparation is not a guarantee that their prioritized LED budgeted items would be financed during the budget execution.

Findings of this study about women mainstreaming in LED process differs from what has been found by Olusola (2016) where gender mainstreaming strategies were not undertaken in the two local governments due to a complete lack of comprehension of what gender issues are about. For this study, the Adenta Municipal Assembly mainstreams women participation in LED process despite the lack of a comprehensive LED strategy. Nonetheless, the assembly's processes of mainstreaming LED do not comply with the processes identified in the literature. According to the Ministry of Local Government (2014), LED mainstreaming involves six stages comprising; Pre-initiation, Initiation, Diagnostic analysis, LED stakeholders dialogue, Implementation of LED action plan, Resources and Participatory monitoring & evaluation. Analyzing the LED mainstreaming process by the Adenta municipality revealed that, the assembly partly followed the LED process stipulated by the Ministry of Local Government. The assembly's LED process involved five (5) stages comprising – an assessing of the local economy, initiation of LED programs, developing a LED strategy and action plan, implementation of LED action plan and monitoring & evaluation. This indeed affirms the claims that, mainstreaming and implementing LED is not a one-size fit all situation (National LED Policy and Action Plan, 2020). Thus, it is subjected to different processes depending upon the context/locality in which it is been undertaken. Similar to the Adenta Municipal Assembly's LED mainstreaming process – in terms of stages is the classification by Yatta (2015) which also involves five (5) stages comprising; An assessment of the local economy as the first stage, moving from knowledge to vision, and then programmes

as the second stage, from programs to projects, LED strategy & Action plan and Implementation & monitoring as the fifth stage. Even due the LED process in Adenta Municipality has the same number of stages (5), as what has been identified by Yatta (2015), it however combines some of the stages postulated by Yatta (2015) with some other stages stipulated by the ministry of local government. It does not vividly follow any single LED mainstreaming process as identified in the literature. Contrary to a 2007 survey of Local and District Municipalities in Mpumalanga conducted to assess the extent to which LED was embedded in local policy and practice was the finding that LED processes “are poorly embedded in the majority of municipalities and the basic preconditions for LED process are not in place in the majority of municipalities” (GTZ, 2007, p. 7).

Concerning the challenges in mainstreaming LED, there are two sides of the problem. One, is the challenges that confronts the municipality and the second is about the challenges that confronts the local women. On the part of the assembly, improper LED governance and coordination remained a serious challenged the assembly faced in mainstreaming women into the LED process. This finding confirmed that of Shannon (2018, p.4), that “national, local and regional governments are generally organized by sector such as transport, environment, health”. Similarly, an analysis of the current district assembly organizational structure depicts that there is no specific district department or unit solely responsible for LED administration. This finding has been reiterated by that of Doorgapersad (2017, p.175) that “currently many Integrated Development Plans of municipalities lack gender mainstreaming in their strategic processes.” Findings of this study completely relates with the findings provided by Doorgapresad (2017), except to add that this study deals with municipal LED strategies rather than integrated development plans.

Concerning resource constraints and the issues of funding, the challenge affected both the assembly and the local women in an attempt to mainstream women into the district LED process. The problem of resources constraints and LED financing as found by this study correlates with studies by (Grävingsholt et al., 2006; Boon et al., 2013) which both indicated that, financial challenges limits participation levels as participatory mechanisms entail transaction costs such as time and information requirements and, particularly the cost of delays in preparation and implementation arising from the need to consult and negotiate with the other stakeholders. However, unlike the findings of previous studies in relation to financial and other resources constraints about women participation, the finding of this study about resources and financial constraint was specifically in relation to starting up LED businesses within the district. This study's finding has no relation with transaction and organizational costs involve in mainstreaming the women int LED process and decision making of the municipality.

Finally, the level of illiteracy among rural folks has been identified in the literature (Chiweza, 2016; World Bank 2005; Gyimah & Thompson, 2008) as a key challenge to women participation in local governance decision-making processes. Contrary to the findings of this study, even though some of the women were illiterate, but their illiteracy levels did not negatively affect their participation and mainstreaming into the district LED process. This also contradicts with the findings of Ahenkan et. al., (2013) that, "the assembly members have the power to influence the activities of the district but most of them lack the advocacy and lobbying skills. Most are illiterates and cannot even review development plans". In this study's findings, local women had adequate and sufficient information that made them understood the LED process and were therefore empowered, courtesy of the quality of information they had acquired about LED through the district NBSSI and the BAC outfits. However similar to the findings of previous studies is the

finding by the World Bank (2005) which stated that, illiterate and poorly educated mothers are less able to care for their children, and low education levels limit their participation in public decision-making. Despite this remark by the world Bank, findings of this study revealed otherwise as the illiteracy levels of women participants in LED decision-making within the district could not negatively affect their participation in the district LED process. Indeed, some of the study participant, were illiterates especially the local women, but they completely understood the district LED mainstreaming process and actively participate to the best of their knowledge.

4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter presented, analyzed and provided a discussion of major findings concerning women participation in LED processes and the possibility of mainstreaming women into the LED process within the municipality. This was done in accordance with the objectives of the study. The data analysis and interpretation saw different codes emerging from the process leading to the formation of three major themes which reflected the main objectives of the study. Data was manually reviewed and relevant conclusions made in respect of the research questions. Literature was further reviewed, where findings from previous related studies were cited to either confirm the findings of this study or indicate the differences between this study's findings and that of previous related studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed the major conclusion and recommendations to the research. Specifically, the chapter presented a summary of the findings, drew conclusions on the processes through which women are mainstream into the district LED agenda of the Adenta Municipal Assembly. Finally, the chapter discussed some recommendations on how to mainstream women into district LED processes and decision making within the context of Adenta Municipality.

5.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The summary of the findings has been categorized according to the three main objectives of the research; In view of the first objective which sought to examine how existing municipal participation mechanisms enable meaningful women participation in LED processes and decision making, three (3) participatory mechanisms were identified. These includes; the district LED Sub-committee, the local LED sub-committees and the LED budgeting forum. Concerning the second objective of this study which sought to investigate how women participation in LED processes and decision-making at the local government level can be mainstream, five clear stages were identified. An assessment of the local economy, initiation of LED projects, developing an LED strategy & action plan, implementation of an LED action plan and lastly, monitoring & evaluation of the LED action plan were the five stages the Adenta municipal assembly periodically adopted in their attempts to mainstream women participation in the district LED processes and decision making. Concerning the third objective of the study which aimed to explore the challenges of mainstreaming women participation in LED processes, findings came in two folds, thus, the

challenges that confronted the municipal assembly in their pursuit to mainstream women into the district LED process and the challenges that confronted the rural women in their attempt to participate in the district LED process. Lack of satellite markets, difficulties in registering local businesses and financial constraints were the major impediments against local women participation in LED process. On the part of the municipal assembly, improper LED governance & coordination structures, the absence of a district LED strategy, inability of the district to initiate LED activities for the women, time constraints on the part of the women and resources challenges to facilitate women mainstreaming into the LED process were some impediments against the assembly in their quest to mainstream women into the district's LED process and decision-making.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

This study generally sought to investigate how women mainstreaming into a district LED process is carry-out within the context of Adenta Municipal Assembly. Although, the findings of the study indicated that women are fairly represented on the district LED sub-committee. However, decisions agreed at the sub-committee levels needs the approval of the general assembly to hold. Meanwhile, women form less than one-third of the general assembly membership. This composition does not favor the women as much as it favors men. It made the selection of women to form the district LED sub-committee a little bit difficult as only a few women were ready for selection onto the committee for LED.

The existing participatory mechanisms within the municipality provided good platforms for women participation in LED affairs within the District. The available platforms were effective as it provided women with the opportunity to integrate their decisions about LED into the district action plans. Secondly, such participatory mechanisms had also been concluded to be effective because it provided sufficient space for women representation, and again ensured that women were

not just represented but also, they fully participated in the district LED decision making process. This notwithstanding, the findings of the study revealed that women within the assembly have a fair understanding of LED affairs. They avail themselves for LED issues once authorities of the assembly involve them. Similarly, women assembly members demonstrated their utmost commitment towards LED issues within the district regardless of their numbers. Many issues about LED were initiated for discussions by the women assembly members. They also brought up the concerns of various women groups in LED within the district to their sub-committees' levels for discussions. They served as a voice for the voiceless women in LED at the assembly level by constantly seeking solutions from the assembly to the problems of the women.

Concerning district LED strategies, the municipality do not have a district LED strategy. The LED activities the district implemented were mostly initiated by other actors in LED such as; (Community base organizations, private individuals, local business owners e.t.c). The districts own LED activities have been that of trainings such as capacity building, soap & detergents production and other soft skills training. About LED mainstreaming process, the district again lacks a comprehensive LED mainstreaming stages, thus, the levels involve in mainstreaming LED in the district deviates from what is contained in the literature. Besides, the district sometimes adopts LED mainstreaming strategies depending on the type of LED initiative under implementation. This, implies that the processes of mainstreaming women participation into the district LED process varies from one LED initiative to the other.

Finally, mainstreaming women participation in the district LED processes and decision making could not come without challenges. Both the municipal assembly and the women involve in LED implementation had their shares of challenges. However, many of the challenges were not complementary, thus, problems that the assembly faced in mainstreaming LED were not the same

as those of which the rural women faced. But in all, the two components of problems contributed in making women mainstreaming in LED affairs difficult to implement. On the contrary, in terms of financial/resources constraint, both the women and the District faced the same challenge. Hence financial challenge was concluded as the biggest challenges against women mainstreaming in LED within the District. Such problems must seriously be tackled if the district is to succeed in mainstreaming women into LED processes and decision making.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it recommends that there should be specific LED institutions at the district level fully equipped with both human and infrastructural resources to run the offices. People with technical knowledge or academic backgrounds in the field of LED should be staffed in such offices to drive the local economy. With the help of such a technical and administrative capacity, the team should develop a comprehensive district LED strategy and outline how the assembly could mainstream women participation into the LED process within the district. That administrative institution should be in charge of all the district LED affairs and be in the forefront of LED implementation by initiating LED activities that would be implemented within the district. For the purpose of coordination governance, the institution should be reporting directly to the district coordinating director. It could also be established as a full department under the current district assembly structure such that the activities of the institution / department would not be too separated or independent of the district assembly.

The study further recommends that, there should be complete application of gender responsive budgeting approach in all phases of the budget cycle in district budgetary planning, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation processes to promote women mainstreaming in LED. Gender responsive budgeting can be advanced through the use of budget call circular to

communicate the goals and the processes for gender budgeting. At the district level, the budget call circular could be distributed to all departments/units for their use in preparing budget submissions; this should be followed by a statement on how the budget is covering women participation in LED issues and the statement should be included in the final district composite budget reflecting how the budget is providing for expenditure on women mainstreaming in LED affairs.

Women in LED affairs must be empowered to be able to effectively participate in LED decision makings. An empowered woman would make time to honor an invitation to attend a meeting to discuss issues about LED. When women are empowered, they develop the courage and confidence to contribute their opinions in meetings even if such meetings are male/men dominated, it also equips them with the requisite skills to be able to stay on the same level grounds with their male counterparts in terms of decision making. Women focusing too much on their LED activities without making time to participate in meetings that would ensure their mainstreaming into the district LED process is because they are not empowered. Hence, to achieve women mainstreaming into the district LED process, women in LED activities must first be empowered.

Financial constraints have been a challenge to many governance issues but not only LED. The municipal assembly must make financial allocation out of their revenues purposely for women participation in LED issues. If mainstreaming women into LED would be feasible at the district level, then many women must be identified in LED affairs. To ensure that more women are into LED would require that the assembly encourage women participation in LED processes. Such participation comes at a cost which would again require the assembly to make sufficient financial provisions for it. On this ground, it is recommended that a percentage of the district assemblies common fund be allocated for women mainstreaming into LED activities. Similarly, some amount

from the internally generated funds should take care of the activities of women groups and associations that are LED related in the district. As more resources are devoted towards women participation in LED, mainstreaming women in LED processes becomes easier.

Another recommendation that emanated from this study was the creation of satellite or linking markets that would enhance the local economy and drive the interest of many women to walk into LED. As more women take interest and participate in diverse LED activities within the district, it makes it easy for the municipality to mainstream them into the district LED process. The ability of the assembly to establish satellite markets in vantage parts of the municipality creates available markets for the LED products from the women. Besides creating satellite markets, the municipality should devise means of accessing other markets to enhance local competitiveness of the locally manufactured products by the women. Such tendencies could promote and boost LED businesses when the women are able to find ready markets for their LED products. The idea is that, once the local women are certain about the availability of markets for their LED products, they become more interested in LED affairs. Developing more interest in the district LED affairs means that women do not become apathetic towards attending LED meetings at the assembly level. The assembly leverages on that attitude about the women and are able to mainstream them into the various LED stages.

Finally, the assembly could also mainstream women in the district LED processes by facilitating the registration of LED activities women engage in within the municipality. In terms of the agriculture products such as the fish farming and snail rearing, women need to get some forms of documentation such as business registration certificates and certification from the foods and drugs board. The difficulties the women face especially in getting the food and drugs board certification is so cumbersome that it demoralized them from actively involving in developing the local

economy. If the municipal assembly could help the women with the registrations of local businesses by facilitating the processes involve in acquiring business registration certificates and that of the foods and drugs board, it would boast the capacity of women in LED and subsequently afford the assembly the opportunity to mainstream women activities in LED.

5.4 STUDY CONTRIBUTION

This research had three (3) major contributions, thus, in terms of theory, policy and practice as classified below.

THEORY

- Theoretically, this study contributed to factoring the patriarchy theory into the local government system which has completely been neglected by previous studies. Other studies that employ the theory concentrated on national governments. Theoretically, this study extends the literature by exploring the theory within the local government context.
- Since there are no adequate studies on LED within the African region, this study extends the scarce literature on LED to enable the concept gain popularity within the region. Popular studies on LED abounds in America and Europe, LED is yet to gain popularity within the African context in terms of research and practice. This study contributes to the few studies on LED in African by enabling the concept gain the needed popularity in theory.

POLICY

- The recommendations would create awareness concerning government policy thinking about mainstreaming women participation into the district LED process. As governments keep reviewing and amending policy proposals on how to develop local economies, and create employment at the local levels, recommendations from this study would offer some inputs into how policies could be rolled out towards mainstreaming women participation into LED at the local government levels.

PRACTICE

- The study offered some recommendations which when implemented could enable MMDAs mainstream women participation into LED practices which they currently are unable to do due to varied reasons. Practically, the implementation of these study recommendations could equip MMDAs with the skills they need to initiate and mainstream women participation in LED at the local level.
- Because the study focused on women, it contributes to the unabated globally discussion on gender equality. Women and gender issues have continuously been discussed in many forums both locally and internationally. This study offers a piece of contribution to the discussion as it brings into the limelight the issues of women participation in LED at the local levels.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Future studies should concentrate on how to help MMDAs develop specific district LED strategies. So that every district can develop and own a LED strategy.

- Other studies should also investigate how to properly mainstream LED into the district assembly system.
- Further studies should be conducted to understand the role of central governments in mainstreaming women into LED at the district levels.
- Other studies should also find answers to how mainstreaming LED into the district assembly system could enhance LED promotion and development.

5.6 CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

Finally, the researcher encountered some constraints in coming up with the study. Some of the challenges include;

- The biggest challenge of this study was the apparent lack of district data on LED. Even though LED is much talked about in theory, however, at the district level there is no comprehensive data about LED activities. The NBSSI and the BAC are the most common outfits that have some concrete information about the development of local businesses within the municipality. The district itself lacks standard data about LED which made data collection very difficult for the researcher from the assembly's point.
- Apathetic towards participating in the study. Some study respondents were very apathetic towards participating in the research and regularly complained about the want of time to answer the research questions that are posed. Very few respondents were ready to spend up to thirty (30) minutes of their time in answering the research questions. Despite several efforts of the researcher to get many respondents as possible, some respondents deliberately declined to participate in the researcher after the researcher had wasted a lot of time booking appointments to meet up with them on several occasions. This delayed the study and finally, the researcher had to do without such respondents.

- Financial challenges. The cost involved in data collection process was a serious challenge. Many participants, especially the focus group discussion members, were reluctant to participate in the study for free. The researcher had to pay for the transport fees of all Hon. Assembly members who were invited to the focus group discussions organized at the assembly hall. Same payment was also made to the various women groups that took part in the other focused group discussion.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE (1): How does the existing municipal participation mechanisms enable meaningful women participation in LED action planning and decision making?

How do women participate in LED action planning and decision making in the Municipal Assembly?

How do women participate in the municipal LED budgeting processes?

How does the LED sub-committee promote Women participation in LED action planning and decision making?

How does the business advisory center in the district support women participation in LED affairs?

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO (2): How can women participation in LED processes be mainstream in Adenta Municipal Assembly?

How is the assembly mainstreaming female participation in LED process?

How does the assembly incorporate LED action plans into the Medium Term Development Programmes?

How are women involved in the municipal annual action plan development process?

How are women encouraged/empowered to participate in LED action planning and decision making at the district level?

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE (3): How is the Adenta Municipal Assembly Challenged in mainstreaming women participation in LED action planning and decision making?

How is the municipal assembly constrained in mainstreaming women participation in LED action planning and decision making?

How are women constrained from participating in LED affairs in the district level?

How can the assembly improve women participation in LED action planning and decision making?

How can women participation in LED affairs at the district level be enhanced?

Category of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Technocrats	20
Assembly members	25
Municipal chief executive	1
Presiding member	1
Total	47

Technocrats

Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD), the Municipal Development Planning Officer (MDPO), Community Development and Social Protection Officer (CDSPO), the Municipal Finance Officer (MFO), the Municipal Internal Audit Officer (MIAO), the Municipal Budget Officer (MBO),

committee members on the LED sub-committee and all committee members on the BAC Sub-Committee.

Reasons for their selection

The **municipal chief executive and presiding member** will be selected because they are directly involved in making decisions that touches on LED issues. Also, being the political head (MCE) within the municipality, he will be in the position to provide the researcher with vital information about LED execution that is useful to the study.

At the local level, **assembly members** are directly involved in LED programs implementation, this makes their inclusion in the study compulsory. They possess valid information about previous LED processes that occurred in the assembly. This can help them make valid inputs into how women participation in LED can be mainstream in the assembly.