

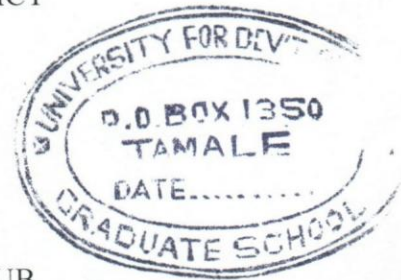
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WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL POLITICS: POTENTIALS AND
CHALLENGES IN LAWRA DISTRICT



POLYCARP BEYELLE KUUSOKUB

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



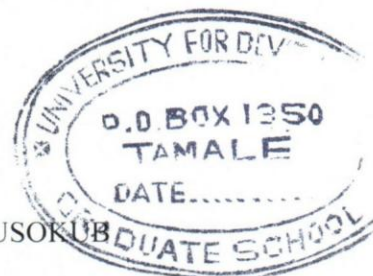
2011

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL POLITICS: POTENTIALS AND
CHALLENGES IN LAWRA DISTRICT

BY

POLYCARP BEYELLE KUUSORUB



THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT, FACULTY OF PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT,
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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
(MPHIL) DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT


2011





DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere:

Candidate's Signature:  Date: 9th JUNE, 2011


Name: Polycarp Beyelle Kuusokub

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:  Date: 9 June 2011

Name: Prof Leonard D. Baer

Head of Department's Signature:  Date: 20/06/11

Name: Dr R.D. Boye Bandie.

HEAD
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND MANAGEMENT
F. P. L. M.
U. D. S.
WA CAMPUS
P. O. BOX 520. WA

ABSTRACT

It is acknowledged that women constitute a greater proportion of the world's population. However, globally, women are recognized to be among the most vulnerable people in the society. They suffer many deprivations including marginalization, subjugation, powerlessness and voicelessness. The main problem of this study was to assess the low participation of women in national politics, in Lawra District in the Upper West Region. The population of Lawra District is heterogeneous comprising Lobis, Dagaaba, and some few other groups that give a total population size of 101,434 with women constituting 54,138 as at the time of this study. In this study both qualitative and quantitative research design were employed as well as appropriate sampling techniques such as simple random sampling and purposive sampling. The instruments used were questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions.

The study revealed that the low participation of women in national politics in Lawra District was due to fear and the lack of political empowerment of women in the area as well as rigid socio – cultural practices which tend to create cultural gender perceptions in both men and women to weaken the interest of women to participate in politics. The traditional involvement of women in household management coupled with the demonstration of inferiority complex in women were also observed as obstacles to the low political involvement of women, while the literacy level of women hampers women's political careers, the same does not apply to men. In the light of these findings, the researcher recommends that women confidence level should be improved through political empowerment, education and a quota should be compulsorily given to women at the party levels to enhance the participation of women in national politics. The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are matters of human rights and conditions for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as women's issues.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No vision or great work is accomplished without the support of other people. Many individuals have supported and contributed to the success of this work in the kindness of God. My sincere thanks go to the Almighty God for that.

I am particularly grateful to my dear wife and my senior brother for their financial support throughout the time of this programme and to Mr Fredrick Kuupille a family friend. Their contributions were immeasurable to me.

To my Supervisor, Professor Lenny Baer I want to register my profound gratitude and appreciation for his work, useful criticisms, suggestions and the encouragement given to me for this work to be successful.

I really wish to sincerely thank Mr Nyarkoh – Larbi Francis my course mate who was instrumental in providing me with a lot of materials related to the topic and more specifically spending his time on the internet with me for more information.

To the entire Wa Senior High School Staff who never hesitated to assist me when I called on them individually, I highly appreciated that so much, may God bless us.



DEDICATION

To my beloved parents Mr. Donatus Kuusokub and Mrs. Theresa Kuusokub all of blessed memory, a couple of great resource and influence; I dedicate this work to you for having faith in my vision and compassion.

And to my dear wife Mrs. Leonicia Kuusokub and children, Prosper, Protus, Paula, Pearl and Douglas who really missed my comfort from time to time as a result of this work.



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1.0 Background to the study

In the world today, representation and participation of women in formal government legislative and administrative bodies has become a concern to many nations. Gender needs to be considered at each and every state of policy formulation. As a matter of concern, two important international agreements were ratified by national governments by which they committed themselves to integrate gender perspectives in the functioning of their institutions and in their policies. They are the International Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). These agreements have been very important because they introduced a gender perspective in government institutions and policies (Brambilla, 2001). The International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific is running a project on facilitating the fulfilment of State Obligation towards Women's Equality as it monitors and facilitates governments' implementation of CEDAW. One can vividly recall the birth of Ghana's Fourth Republic in November – December of 1992 Presidential and Parliamentary elections under a new constitution. This brought into being the concept of grassroots participation in the democratisation process. This informed the choice of the research area to investigate the participation level of women in national politics.

Perhaps the question one may ask is why women's participation in national politics is so important at the district level. Many views or responses can be given by different people regarding their cultural background but to me, true democracy of the people would suffer or be marginalised if there is no equal opportunity for both males and females in the decision – making process. By true democracy it means equal accessibility to all political opportunities by both males and females at all levels including national politics. Such opportunities include equal access to education, resources of all kinds, recognition, information, support, consultation and political decision making processes just to mention but a few which invariably affect the life of all people in the community irrespective of one's gender.

In my opinion, based on my personal observation in the Nandom traditional area, the current generation of women are calling for effective community participation in all development programmes where gender is certainly a priority. This call is in line



with the current focus on democracy and gender equity in Africa with Ghana being no exception, particularly Lawra District.

According to the Institute for Democratic Governance (2007), Ghana has made undertakings at the international, regional and national levels to promote, protect and respect women's rights. In particular, Ghana is a party to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The last four decades have seen four United Nations Conferences on Women where far-reaching blue-prints have been produced for eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. The major development agencies include a mandatory framework for all activities to check that gender is considered even in seemingly neutral projects. For example, some years ago the World Bank (1995:2) accepted the women's monitoring committee to keep 'Women's Eyes on the Bank' as a step toward bridging the gap between men's and women's representation in the decision making process.

Although most African countries have made great strides since the liberal political reforms of the 1990s onwards towards gender equality and participation, the evidence on the ground you will soon read about shows that the participation of women in national politics remains one of the key challenges that Africa still faces. Women are still on the periphery of politics as evidenced by the fact that there is currently only one female President in the whole continent of Africa and she is even haunted after the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) - Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia (Africa Report, 2009). The challenges still faced by women in national politics often manifest themselves during party primary elections. Often it is men who stand and win leaving women to be appointed through some form of special dispensation.

It is gratifying to note that gender equality issues are of great concern to very prominent world leaders such as the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon. In his message on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), he identifies two indispensable elements of gender-responsive accountability; namely, 'that women must be legitimate members of any oversight or accountability process, and secondly, national commitments to gender equality and women's rights must be among the standards against which public decisions are assessed' (Ban Ki-Moon, 2009:2) This indicated that the position of the United Nations on gender equality is



optimistic on women's rights and called for an end to the under rating of women's opinion which men have not considered for long in the political arena. This clearly defined the marginalisation and voiceless level of women's participation in decision making in the world.

Significantly, as observed in communities in Africa, particularly in Ghana, women are a major force behind people's participation in the life of society. Not only do they comprise the majority of the excluded from participation but they play a leading role in the emergence of groups in the society in this modern era, this is textually evidenced with the percentage of 79.3% of temporary heads of households being females in Ghana (GSS, PHC 2000). The temporary heads of household's percentage in the country transcends into the region with 79.9% and to the Lawra District with 86.9% females. This goes in line with the World Bank conclusion that "women can be an effective force for the rule of law and good governance" (World Bank, 2001:2) and has increased its support of women-oriented programs. The view of the World Bank to the researcher is in conformity to that of the conclusion that gender equality is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Alberdi, 2009:3) on the same subject with the UN Secretary-General. It therefore implies that the successful achievement of the MDGs perhaps depends largely on women's participation in national politics at all levels because politics is central to any achievement process and for that matter indispensable in human (man and woman) life.

Still on the international sphere, gender and representation is also an important issue. Good governance has become important in the political discourse of world aid agencies and financial institutions in this modern time. Many strategies have been discussed for increasing women's representation in national politics. Party lists in South Africa and the UK, and quotas at the local governance levels in India are two important examples. Mention needs to be made on the platform for action agreed upon in Beijing in September 1995, which emphasized both the need to increase the levels of women's participation in politics and also the need for the development of national machineries for the advancement of women. Practical strategies for working towards gender balance such as affirmative actions have been taken by various governments and women's groups all over the world.



Perhaps culturally in Africa, women by their nature are confronted with other development issues which make them busy to the extent of having little time to consider their own political development, hence men by their nature dominate in the decision making process. This assertion is observed by Rai (2005) who questioned the possibility of women having access to the world of policy decision making so dominated by men today.

Despite all these efforts, the under-representation of women in national politics is evident in almost all countries in the world. Political elections into national positions have not been favourable to both women and women's groups particularly in West Africa. In most cases, men tend to dominate the seats in either the Lower House or Upper House in many countries. Among the thirteen selected countries on the table below, Ghana scores 9.6% in 2004 representation of women in national parliament in her single House of Parliament, according to statistics from The Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 31 May 2009. However, for purposes of space, the researcher has adopted some selected West African Countries in order of the percentages of seats from the lowest in descending order that can assist him justify his position on the topic under study.



Table 1.1 Women's Representation in Selected West African Countries

| COUNTRY | LOWER OR SINGLE HOUSE | | | UPPER HOUSE OR SENATE | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| | Elections | Seats | Women | Elections | Seats | Women % |
| Nigeria | 2007 | 358 | 7% | 2007 | 109 | 8.3% |
| Cote D'Ivoire | 2000 | 203 | 8.9% | - | - | - |
| Gambia | 2002 | 53 | 9.4% | - | - | - |
| Ghana | 2008 | 200 | 9.6% | - | - | - |
| Guinea Bissau | 2008 | 100 | 10% | - | - | - |
| Mali | 2007 | 147 | 10.2% | - | - | - |
| Togo | 2007 | 81 | 11.1% | - | - | - |
| Niger | 2004 | 114 | 12.4% | - | - | - |
| Liberia | 2005 | 64 | 12.5% | 2005 | 30 | 16.7% |
| Cameroun | 2007 | 180 | 13.0% | - | - | - |
| Sierra Leone | 2007 | 121 | 13.3% | - | - | - |
| Burkina Faso | 2007 | 111 | 15.3% | - | - | - |
| Senegal | 2007 | 150 | 22.0% | 2007 | 100 | 40% |

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009.

In Ghana, one can see Government's effort in closing the gender gap by adapting affirmative actions such as the current emphasis on free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), Girl-Child Education, Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) for girls, Scholarship Schemes for girls, anti-violence laws, interstate succession laws, the establishment of Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DVVSU), creation of the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs, the National Commission on Women and Children (NCWD) and a lot of numerous policy changes making it mandatory to have a number of females in organisations as gender mainstreaming is very prominent today. Yet more collaborative efforts are needed to bring this to its full realisation in this century.



As society develops and democracy becomes the mode of governance, the perception about the role of women in society assumes a positive face and their contributions to society are acknowledged. With the table above it can be concluded that over the years, however, women have been relegated to the background on issues of the general overall development especially in national politics in Ghana. However, historical evidences are available to prove that the few Nigerian women who are in national politics have for long been playing a crucial role in the political life of the country, and this has contributed in no small measure in shaping the political system of Nigeria (Gonyok, 2008). However, Nigeria has only 7% women in its lower parliament, 8.3% in its upper parliament. Therefore, for development of any kind to be successful, a vantage position should be accorded to women, as they constitute a large proportion of the population in Ghana.

This argument can be substantiated by the report of the 2000 Population and Housing Census which showed that women constitute over half of Ghana's population. They form 51% of the population of Ghana and if this number is left out in planning, political decision-making and policy-making processes of the country, then good governance will suffer. In this regard, they should not be left out in the issues of decision-making that equally affect their lives as a people.

In Ghana, it is often seen that the few women who participate actively in political issues, as a result of political re-awakening and awareness, are more often than not, besieged with challenges of which discrimination is rife. Such discriminations include labelling them as "too known", putting them in subordinate positions, and using derogatory words on them by their male counterparts in the community level. The idea of seeing women playing the number two (subordinate) role at home has surfaced in the political life of women, creating the gender gap in national politics especially in the northern part of Ghana. This ought not to be so with regards to the global call for political dispensation. Traditionally, based on my own experiences growing up and living in the Lawra District and particularly in Nandom-Guo, a majority of men are preoccupied with the notion that political decision-making and leadership are exclusively for the men folk while women are to be instructed on what to do. This cultural belief seems to be deeply rooted in the political life of the people in the District.



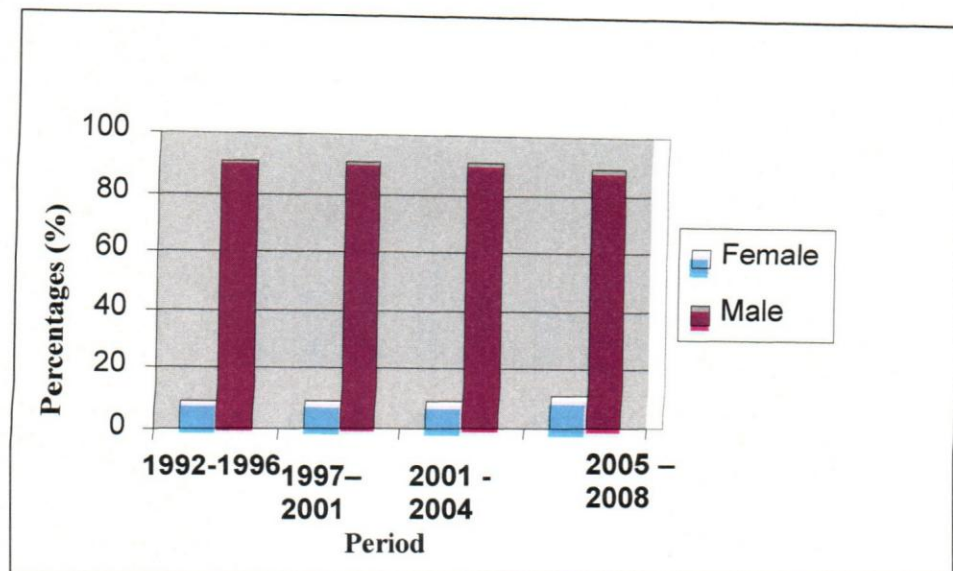
Many countries, including Ghana, are making efforts to bridge the gap between men and women in national politics. In Ghana, the 1992 Constitution (Chapter 5, Article 1 & 2) also makes provisions for non-discrimination against women. In addition, the current political dispensation through Affirmation Action has mandated all District Assemblies to ensure that 50% of Government appointees are women so as to promote greater involvement of women in the decision-making process at local governance level as compared to what obtains in other parts of the world.

Ironically, national politics and elections are important democratic vehicles that women could easily rally around to voice their concerns and mobilize themselves to increase their voices and representations in the political process. Therefore, the need to continue discussions and appraisals of women's involvement in decision-making processes still remains very critical not only to women's groups but all development partners and collaborators in the development process.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

On 6th March 1957 Ghana became an independent nation. Given the bright political, economic and social progress at independence one expects gender equality in all grounds to exist as we now begin to take our own initiatives for development. This did not happen as one might expect. Right from independence, gender inequality features from the national level to the regional and transcends to the district level of governance. The figure below shows the differences in political participation by gender in the national level from 1992 – 2008.





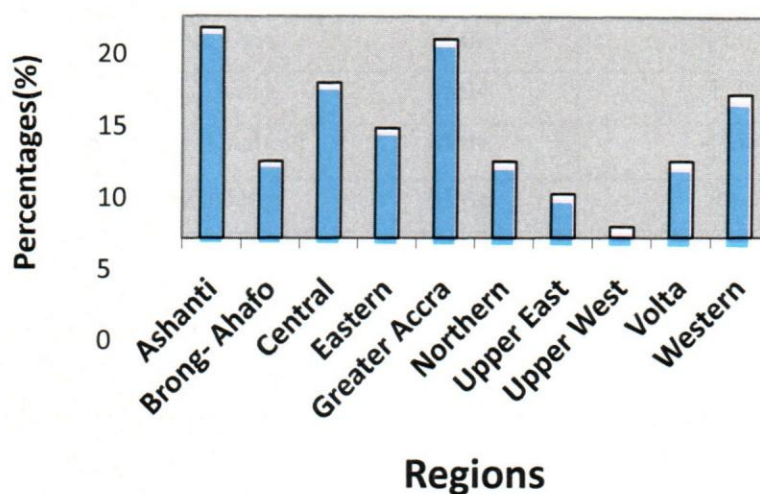
Source: Electoral Commission, Wa (2009)

Figure 1.1: National Profile of Elected Parliamentarians (1992-2008)

From the figure above it is clear that less than 10% of women were represented in Parliament from 1996 – 2008. This justifies the origin of the problem from the national level.

A similar trend reflected at the regional level. Over a period of 19 years, the Upper West Region was the least represented in National Parliament, with only one elected female official, Mrs Alice Boom in the then Jirapa-Lambusie Constituency. The bar chart below indicates the figures by regions over the period.





Source: Electoral Commission, Upper West Region 2009.

Figure 1.2: Regional Representation of Women Elected into National Parliament from 1992-2008

The concerns raised by various groups of both men and women are an indication that for a long time women's participation in national politics has been low by 1% in the region. Not surprising, therefore, at the District level the trend has not changed since 1954 to 2008 in terms of elections of women into national politics. The tables below represent that of the 1954 and the 2008 elections, where no female participated in contesting as a candidate in the Constituency.

Table 1.2 Results of Lawra Constituency Election in 1954

| Candidate Name | Sex | % |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Naa Abayifaa Karbo | Male | 17.6 |
| Nonnatuo Gandah | Male | 24.2 |
| Sylvester Saaziri | Male | 18.6 |
| Naa Konkoo Polkuu | Male | 15.7 |
| Severio Termaghre | Male | 5.0 |

Source: Lentz, (2007.)

Table 1.3 Results of Lawra Constituency Election in 2008

| Name of Candidate | Sex | % |
|---------------------|------|------|
| Ambrose Dery | Male | 47.0 |
| Fatchu Henry | Male | 1.8 |
| Benjamin Kunbour | Male | 44.0 |
| Bede Ziedeng | Male | 4.6 |
| Ngmenkye C. Yelvele | Male | 1.6 |
| Dabuo Wilson | Male | 0.9 |

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2009.

The tables above portray that no single woman participated in national politics during the early days and surprisingly my interaction with the District Assembly indicates that the situation has not changed at the time of my study and this is evidence in the 2008 election result. This makes the study very relevant to really ascertain why this gap should exist even now in the Lawra Constituency as a District.

The question that remained unanswered is why no single woman contested in the national politics since 1954 to 2008 in the Constituency. This is an area of interest to the researcher and perhaps many others including the politicians now and in future. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the low participation of women in national politics in the Lawra District.

1.2 Research Questions/Objectives

In this study on the low participation of women in national politics in Lawra District, the following questions would be answered:

❖ Main Question:

1. What factors account for the low participation of women in national politics in the Lawra District?

The objective of this main question is to identify the various explanations why there is a glass ceiling for women's participation in national politics in the Lawra District. By low participation it means the number of women being elected into national politics in the Lawra District.

❖ Sub questions



2. To what extent are women interested in being involved in national politics?

The objective here for women's being "involved" is meant to assess how women are interested and are keen to be voted for as well as advocate for gender equality in national politics from the Lawra District.

3. What are the perceptions of men and women towards women in national politics in the District?

The objective in this question is to identify perceptions of both men and women towards women who are into national politics in the Lawra District.

4. In what ways are women informed and access political information channels (mass media and others) that are available in the District?

The objective here is to establish the extent of political awareness and usage of the information channels (mass media and others), if any exist, by both males and females in the District. The mass media include TV, radio, newspapers, and journals.

5. What motivational factors can encourage women's participation in national politics?

This question will lead me to identify and examine the interventional areas from the opinions of people that can enable me to suggest pragmatic measures to overcome the barriers that might limit women's participation in national politics in the District.

6. What is the level of support from men and women to female candidates who go into national politics?

The objective of this question is to examine the extent of support from both men and women to female candidates who go into national politics. The level of discrimination if any would also be assessed by this question.

1.3 Scope of the Study

On the whole, the study covers selected electoral areas from the two traditional areas that form the district and make up the Constituency as well; that is, Nandom traditional area and the Lawra traditional area. The study mainly focuses on men and women, both literate and illiterate, who are resident from these areas and who are registered voters. The population of Lawra District is heterogeneous comprising of Dagaaba, Lobis and a few other tribes.



1.4 Significance of the Study

Academically, this study will add to knowledge on gender equality and its related areas in the district, region, Ghana and the world that would serve as a source of reference to readers and researchers. Also, the study will help readers appreciate the need for women's political participation in national politics in the development process. Other earlier researchers on the area have been duly acknowledged as a measure of their sacrificial work. Many women political activists will find this work useful to them to tap the political potentials of women and assist women to overcome the political challenges that they may encounter in their political careers. The Lawra District Assembly and the entire Constituency would find this research very useful to them by its key findings, suggestions and recommendations. The individual political parties would get to be conscious of the marginalisation level of women in their political parties through this research. Also, individual politicians both new and old would appreciate the findings as a measure of consciousness on women representations and political participation in national politics. The Non-governmental Organisations' and Government's lead workshop facilitators both in and out of the District would be interested in the findings and recommendations not only as a reflection in other Districts in the Upper West Region but a dependable source of information for their facilitations on gender and national politics in the region.

1.5 Purpose of the study

According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the total population in the Upper West Region is 576,583 and this represents 3% of the national population. The District share of the population by females is indicated in the table below.

Table 1.4 Female Populations by District as at 2000

| District | Women's percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Lawra | 53.4% |
| Jirapa/Lambusie | 53.0% |
| Sissala (now West and East) | 51.8% |
| Nadowli | 52.4% |
| Wa | 51.1% |

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2000)

A critical look at the table, give evident that women constitute a majority of the population in all the Districts in the Upper West Region; this is an indication that



they should have had fair representation in national politics, but it is the reverse. The study further established that in the Lawra District about 79.3% of women are heads of households, albeit temporarily, typically to the cultural practices of the area it is the expectation that heads of households should have been predominantly male. This comes as result of the neglect of family responsibilities by majority of men coupled with death, separation and migration and travelling for greener pastures. Significantly, this is an indication that women are substantive heads which role they perform creditably (GSS, PHC 2000). This presupposes that women can be good administrators and good politicians if given a fair knot but surprisingly they end up not being represented or marginalised in their political representation in national politics.

Culturally, as one observes in the area, women are usually seen to be successful in many of the development areas in which they traditionally engage themselves, such as trading, farming, house-keeping, business, child-rearing, and other productive areas.

This observation or assertion goes to confirm the much-quoted UN Report on gender statistics (cited in Flynn, 2002) which remains as true today as when formulated over a decade ago, that:

- “Women perform two-thirds of the world’s work”
- “Women earn one-tenth of the world’s income”
- “Women are two-thirds of the world’s illiterates”
- “Women own less than one-hundredth of the world’s property” (Flynn, 2002:60).

Comparatively, much is not found in women in the national political development of their areas in terms of fighting for the fair share of their representation and participation to obtain the national cake for equitable development. Even though the District percentage of women elected to national politics remain zero the national percentage is 7.9% (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009), much is still needed to be done in the District. Women’s low levels of participation in national politics is an area that the research wants to find out and suggest some interventional measures to improve the situation and challenge women in the Lawra District to rise up to the political development of the District and country at large, as is currently being done by Ghana’s Speaker of Parliament, Mrs. Justice Joyce Bamford-Addo, and the Chief

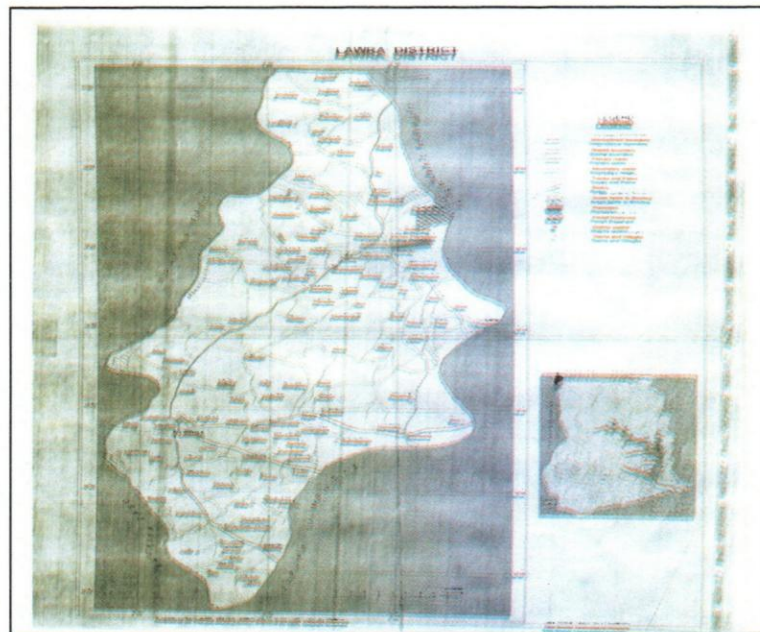


Justice, Mrs. Justice Georgina Wood in this 5th republic of Ghana's democratic process.

1.6 Study Area

1.6.1 Location

Lawra District is one of the nine Districts that make up the Upper West Region that was created in 1974. The nine Districts that constituted the region as at the time of the study are Lawra, Jirapa, Lambusie-Kani, Sissala East, Sissala West, Nadowli, Wa East, Wa Municipal and Wa West District Assemblies. Lawra District lies in the North Western corner of the Upper West Region of Ghana. It is bounded to the East by the Lambusie-Kani District, to the West by river Black Volta, the north by Burkina Faso and to the south by Jirapa District.



Source: Town & Country Planning Department,
Figure1.3, Map of Lawra District

1.6.2 Lawra District Population as at 2000

Table 1.5 District Population by Male and Female

| SEX | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Female | 46,723 | 53 |
| Male | 40,804 | 47 |
| Total | 87,527 | 100 |

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2000)



The table above indicates the total population of the District by sex. It is evident from the table that women dominate in terms of numerical strength in the District with a difference of about 6%, yet invariably they are underrepresented in the political decision making in national politics in this era in which citizens are empowered to participate in the decision making process at all the District Assemblies in Ghana (The Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

1.6.3 Political Governance

In Ghana, the 1992 Constitution guaranteed that District Assemblies should be the body responsible for the successful running of the Districts. As such, they are mandated to perform both political and administrative functions of the Districts on behalf of the President of the Republic of Ghana, through their respective Regional Co-ordinating Councils. In this respect, the Lawra District Assembly constitutes a political organ that performs the executive functions of the government and is responsible for the political matters of the District including political participation and political decision making. Therefore, the District Assembly has an executive board and other subsidiary bodies that perform these functions accordingly. Membership is drawn from the electoral areas by elections and by Government Appointment. However, as at the time of the study the current membership was made up of thirty- six (36) elected members and sixteen (16) Government Appointees out of which 3.2% (5) and 18% (5) represented women respectively.

It is prudent to add that the Paramount Chiefs of Nandom and Lawra traditional areas and their sub-chiefs support the District assembly by the exhibition of their traditional political power and administration of their respective traditional areas in the District.

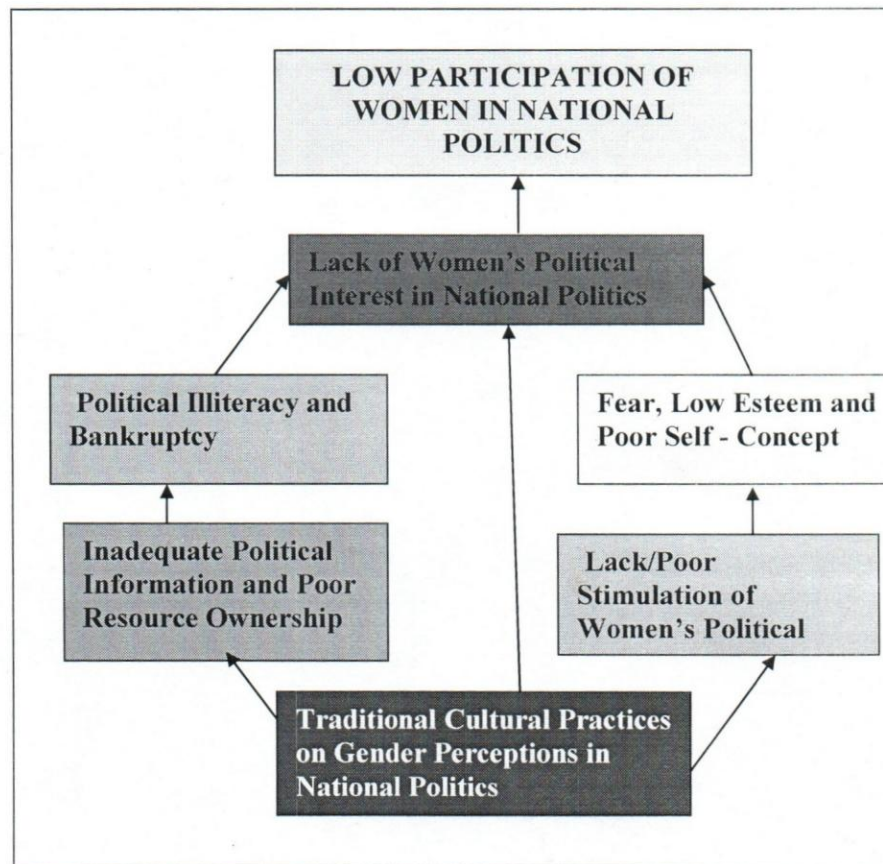
1.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual and political basis of women's historic exclusion from the formal arena of political participation in national politics at the Lawra District level is what the conceptual framework model centred on. The concepts such as Women, Participation, and Politics could be viewed differently by different scholars but they are used in this text with reference to the current study and should be accepted as such. For instance, in the world over, the concept of women may vary but to me a



woman naturally refers to female sex, hence the focus of such women in the Lawra District for this study.

To many political leaders such as Msafiri in Muleba North Constituency of Tanzania, 'participation is a social interaction in a group such as a community, particularly when carried on through attendance at, and contributions to, group activities' (Msafiri, 2007:1) By this study, participation in politics is therefore one aspect of democracy whereby men and women should have equal chances in national politics in Lawra District. Below is a model representation of the conceptual framework presented in an ascending order by the arrows expected as speculation on how the problem manifested from its rudiments resulting too many factors that underpins this study.



Source: Author's construct

Figure.1.4: Conceptual Framework

The above presentation of the conceptual framework is intended to help promote conceptual understanding on the topic on women's participation in national politics in Lawra District, the basis for the study. The diagram is a proposed model that is expected to frame the study's findings in relation to the research questions and



objectives. The first box from the bottom that indicates Traditional Cultural Practices on Gender Perceptions in National Politics presents the base of which the problem is expected to emanate from resulting into several factors in each box that is expected to contribute in diverse ways to the problem that surfaced at the apex for the study. It is expected that the findings may or may not agree with the model above and that will be proved by the findings and analysis in the subsequent chapters.

This model is useful to the study because it will not only help me indicate the sequential inter-relationships of the rudimentary causes of the problem in the District but equally will help facilitate the study, recommend and suggest pragmatic interventional measures to the problem, if found useful to the findings. Also, the theory of cause and effect in research will be explored through the framework to pinpoint or detect how a change in context influenced the outcome of this study in the analysis.

1.8 Limitations/Challenges of the Study

The following limitations were anticipated and encountered during the study;

- Communities in the Lawra District are quite distant apart and require more time and effort to cover all the sample areas with the selected tools (questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews) for the study. In spite of the distance of some communities the researcher made consistent efforts with his assistant to reach the target population at the most convenient time of participants.
- In choosing the two traditional areas for the study, the total District Population would have been appropriate to use as the main criteria but that was too large for the researcher due to time limit and limited resources. This was overcome by considering an appropriate sample size convenient for the study in order to cover some selected areas of the two main traditional areas (Nandom and Lawra) that make up the Lawra District.
- Language barrier surfaced as a challenge especially in the communities in the Lawra traditional area and as a result of that the researcher had to use interpreters at their most convenient time to enable me have a full understanding on the opinions being expressed.



This notwithstanding, the researcher and his assistant had to blend the Nandom dialect of which we are familiar with, with that of the Lawra dialect in order to elicit the appropriate information.

- Once the researcher is not resident in the study area he had to travel several times to meet participants at their convenient time for interaction. More often than not, the available means of transport was the public transport to the District while we rely on relatives and friends' motorbikes to reach out to the communities.
- Some people in Positions of Authority could not be contacted as a result of their work taking them away from the District. The researcher had to substitute them with similar people in Positions of Authority. Others too due to ill-health could not participate as respondents and were replaced.
- Also, the study addresses only one District and only some communities in the District. It is focused on women's participation in national politics; the findings, therefore, do not claim to be generalizable to other Districts in the region or on all development concerns of women in the District.

1.9 Organisation of Work

This work is organised into five chapters. The first chapter has been an introduction to the thesis, and has included the background to the study, the problem statement, and the research questions with their objectives, the scope of the study, significance of the study, the purpose of the study, a brief history of the study area, limitations and challenges of the study. The conceptual framework model and organisation of the work concluded this chapter.

Chapter two reviews related literature under six headings corresponding to the research questions and the research objectives. This includes women and the mass media/political dissemination; participation of women in national politics; motivational factors for women's participation in national politics; marriage as social barriers to women political development; discrimination in political party structures and women and District Assembly elections in Lawra District.



Chapter three looks at the methodology used in the study; research design, sample population, data collection and the instruments used as well as how the data would be analysed.

The findings and analysis of the findings are in chapter four. Chapter five concludes with summary of the key findings of the research. Also, the concluding section of this chapter provides some recommendations and suggestions for future research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section of the study begins with a review of related literature to the work. The related literature is reviewed under six headings corresponding to the research questions and research objectives. These include women and the mass media/political dissemination; participation of women in national politics; motivational factors for women's political participation; marriage as a social barrier to women's political development; discrimination in political party structures; and women and District Assembly elections in the Lawra District.

2.2.1 Women and the Mass Media/Political Dissemination

Globally, the political survival of parties and leadership depend largely on mass media of any form. A good network of the media is central to promoting effective democratic governance and for that matter balancing political gender equality. The significant role of women should not be marginalised in this direction; for instance, it can be observed that globally the few women who are in the media sector play significant roles in the media industry (Women Action, 2000). However, 'the subject/object dichotomy that exclude women from the realm of the subject has had a profound effect on the status of women' (Susan Hekman as cited in Machuchi in Oyeronke, 2005:272).

As a measure to recognise the position of women to access information, in Asia in 2001 the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP) conceived of a project that will help in organising and collecting data about women in politics. This information was to be transformed to useful information and to make them available to women and women's groups. In spite of this great effort men still took advantage to dominate in accessing information because of Africans' belief in the subordination of women particularly in the Lawra District (Chioma, 2005).

The internet has been one of the powerful areas where women can access political information in order to change the history of male domination which was revealed in the study of Gadzekpo (2005:279) that 'conventional history and its discourses were



constructed around the figures of illustrious men and important male - centred events'. However, while some women took advantage of the power of the internet, some women again are being left out for the reason that they do not have access to internet services but are equally not being educated and assisted to use it. This situation makes women have no or very little information on their national political rights of participation in national politics. For example, before the advent of modern democracy women in northern Ghana did not actively participate in political decision making as done by men. This was evident in the study of Mama (1999: 63) when she posits that 'where are women in African political culture?' This is a confirmation of the existence of gender gap in national politics.

Internationally, the major contributions of some key actors such as Regional Gender Programme (RGP) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWP), Women Information and Research Centre (WIRC) and their involvement in promoting the political empowerment of women is sufficient for the researcher to conclude that the exclusion gap of women in national politics is very visible (World Classification on Women in Parliament, 2009).

Quite apart, there have been several policy measures introduced by the government and other international declarations to enhance the status of women, promote their effective participation and ensure that women are represented in government structures at all levels. This was equally observed by Mama (2000:13) that 'up to date national machinery has sought to integrate women into ongoing national development plans'. This is an effort that needs not only appreciation but a collaborative policy to sustain it universally, especially in Ghana. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is significant in this respect; it states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. A sign of recognition of the gender gap in the declaration and the gap transcends to other declarations of the UN on democracy. Notably, the United Nations Declaration on Democracy (UNDP) earmarked 30% as a minimum number of women representation in all spheres of decision-making.

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both



transparent and accountable government for sustainable development in all areas of life (Tsikata, 2000). Women's equal participation in politics plays a pivotal role not only in the general process of the advancement of women but for the enhancement of true democracy in Africa. Indeed, without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. It is in line with that, that the advocate's critique that the national machinery of government only granted few women the opportunity to participate in national politics though the machinery has failed to enhance the political interest of women in civil society (Mama, 2000). This continues to widen the gender gap in national politics.

As a matter of women registering their marginalisation level, section J of the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN called for the launching of broad debate on communication and democracy that would involve the active participation of women in World Conference on Communication as a measure of enhancing women's participation in the decision making process. Equally important to the UN was the need for media and civil society organisations to promote the formulation and adoption of policies that would be based on gender equality, in all political areas to minimise male dominance (Women Action, 2000). In this 21st century, women's right to information and communication is very necessary if countries would consider full representation and participation of women in national politics. As a matter of bridging this gap of marginalisation, Achola (2005:302) posits in his findings that 'African scholars, and especially women, must bring their knowledge to bear on presenting an African perspective on prospects and problem for women in local societies'

In fact, it is time for donor agencies to develop communication strategies for supporting women especially those who are really interested to go into national politics to enable women's access to direct democratic information for good governance. Women's access to political information and political opportunities are possible if we consider the media as an important and essential tool for the basis of the participation of women's in national politics. 'In fact, we cannot deny the importance of collecting information on women, their social, legal, political and economic condition in building a scientific corpus' (Fatou, 1999:35). The recent calls from many organisations for the right action to be taken to increase women's



access to conventional media, electronic and other new media such as the Internet and video games is in the right direction for true democracy. It is time for various Governments to promote positive discrimination for women in access to political information through ICTs training and education in order to enhance equal representation and participation of women in national politics.

In response to the indicative gap of political discrimination, concerns raised by the UN and other women's organisations that lobby and advocate at various levels for equal representations and participation in national politics continue to make evident that there still is the need for other political collaborators to contribute immensely to support the voice of these organisations to facilitate good governance and participatory democracy with equal consideration of women because many women in the world continue to suffer political discrimination and marginalisation in national politics. For instance, a study revealed that women in Burma still face many obstacles in the path to political participation, because the existing political structures excludes average Burmese women from having input in affairs of the state (Msafiri, 2007).

2.4.2 Participation of Women in National Politics

The issue of women's participation in all spheres of life has become a major developmental concern worldwide. Many debates on the above issue have highlighted women's marginalisation in aspects of politics and social life; hence the study of Ofei-Aboagye (2005) concluded that there is a relatively unequal situation of women in politics in spite of their immense contribution to national development. This is an acknowledgement of the gender gap in national politics. This can be traced to various world conferences attended by women's groups and male gender activists. Giving women's significant contribution to the socio-economic development in Africa and particularly in Ghana, it is clear that women's effective participation in national politics leading to their equitable representation in mainstream political decision making as equal partners to bring about a more effective government and a more rapid development process is yet to be realised effectively.

The subject of women's participation in politics and development has gained attention globally since the Beijing Conference on women in the 1990s. For



instance, the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, the Second World Conference on Women in Denmark in 1980 and the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark in 1995, among others, brought to the fore the issue of gender equality and rights. Again, statistics indicate that women are usually at a disadvantage as a result of their low level of education especially mothers coupled with the regular household chores that limit women's participation in decision-making, hence their poor participation in national politics (World Bank, 2005).

The situation in Ireland took a different dimension in spite of gender equality issues being raised by government. This was confirmed by the findings of Eunice McCarthy (2004:61) when she identifies that the 'Ireland government has introduced the anti-discrimination pay act in 1974, the employment equality act in 1977 and the equality status act in 2000'. These acts were purposefully enacted to provide a statutory office to hear claims for redress in the event of discrimination against women on all grounds. McCarthy's study was silent on the event of women not ready to complain out of fear of their subordinate position in the country. The study also failed to categorically indicate what constitutes all grounds. The earlier gender equality acts indicate that woman's participation and representation in national politics continue to be overlooked even if other gender issues are considered. This implies that male dominance in national politics is still prominent in Ireland.

Women Organisations, Associations and Movements play a key role to signify that gender discriminations exist resulting in gaps in women's participation in national politics. These gaps are evident in many countries, just as in the Netherlands, where the gender situation is similar to that of Ireland. Tijdens (2004) reveals that women's movements in the country called for equal rights resulting in the establishment of the equal opportunities commission as an advisory body in 1974 and since then government made funds available to stimulate equal right policy throughout the country. However, the gender equality issue examined by Tijdens (2004) in the Netherlands was on employment, wages and care for children. The study was silent on women's representation and participation in national politics which could serve as a catalyst to boost the achievement of the concerned areas raised by the study. It is evident to state that the situation of women's participation in national politics still needs much attention by gender advocates in the world, particularly in Africa and more especially in Ghana. This is different from Mexico where they organized



‘Women’s parliament to give impetus to national legislative agenda to contribute to eliminating all forms of discrimination against the female sex and promote government policies that fully ensure women’s rights and the application of programmes that benefit them’ (Zabludovsky, 2004:188). Accordingly, these organisations and associations in Mexico seek to promote and achieve a more visible role for women in decision making areas including national politics, providing training and skills required for the development of women in leadership positions, and generating the awareness of the importance of furthering the well-being of women and eliminating the various types of discrimination including political discrimination. In Zabludovsky’s view, this is an indication that in spite of the present condition of discrimination against women in Mexico, the future of women is very bright and women will certainly find their voices heard which will enhance the empowering process of women in the country to bridge the gender gap.

A study by Richardson and Tavik (2004) on women in management positions lamented that Norway is an excellent example of political initiatives and social welfare policies which promote gender equality yet have failed to achieve the desired result. This implies that there is a substantial gender inequality in spite of government affirmative actions on women to have the same rights, obligations and opportunities on all grounds as men. It can further be indicated with reference to the Inter Parliamentary report of 2009 that while there was no single woman in the Upper House or Senate in Norway, 36.1% of women are in the Lower or Single House by Norwegians 2005 election results. The study further concluded that Norwegians in general have over the years believed that they were in the forefront of equality, yet their legislation has not made it possible for them to be proud. This to me is an indication that only a few privileged women in Norway have the opportunity to be in national politics; this is insignificant political representation and participation if gender equality in national politics is to be fully adhered to in this modern era. According to Davidson et al. (2004), there are still substantial discriminatory policies against women to fully participate in national politics. A further example from literature on gender equality indicates that the ‘glass ceiling’ which was described by Morrison et al. (1992, as cited in Davidson et al., 2004:111), might continue to exist not only in Norway but in many countries.



The situation in Poland comparatively is not quite different from that of Norway. By the findings of Siemienska (2004:128) 'women in Poland, like elsewhere, are highly under-represented in top positions in political and economic decision making bodies'. The study attributed this inequality to cultural factors that influence women's aspirations to becoming decision makers and the level of support for women candidates in political parties affect the electoral behaviour of both men and women. This is how the gender gap in women's participation in national politics continues to exist in many countries such as Poland. However, this might be an unfortunate situation in this era of the world becoming a global village where a majority of women are calling for equal representation of women in all spheres of life. It is time for countries to re-examine policies that discriminate political gender equality in order to enhance effective democratic principles that can promote development in this 21st century; after all, women can equally contribute significantly to development and manage women's affairs if they have their own kingdom that excludes men.

Gale and Polnareva (2004) studied women in management in Russia and formed the opinion that, in Russia, there is still no strong party that would include gender equality as a priority in its programme. It is time to give priority to women when planning any new legislation or amend the existing legislations that do not favour women in parliament. It would therefore be appropriate that in all matters consideration should include:

"The right to equal participation of men and women in making decisions at all levels of legislature, executive and judicial authorities and in local government bodies.

"The improvement of electoral legislation towards creating the conditions for involving more women in actualizing the right choice.

"The improvement of legislation on State and Municipal services with a view to the formalization of gender equality in accordance with international standards" (Gale and Polnareva, 2004: 159).

This implies that women in Russia are still discriminated upon in terms of women's participation in national politics though plans are ahead to integrate them in the near future.



Still on the international front, women's situation in politics in New Zealand is quite impressive. For example, the country's concern in gender sensitivity and the zeal to represent women in their national politics is commendable. One study confirms that 'women's power in New Zealand currently achieves high visibility and is part of the swirl of popular commentary' (McGregor, 2004:211). This is because statistics indicate that New Zealand has its first elected female Prime Minister, Helen Clark, who followed the first female Prime Minister, Jenny Shipley. They also have a female Attorney General, Margaret Wilson, a female Chief Justice, Sian Elias and a female Governor General, Dame Silvia Cartwright. Women in governance has improved greatly following the promise of the then first female head of State in New Zealand, Prime Minister Jenny Shipley who during her time did promise to improve the proportion of females on statutory boards by 50% by 2000. The political level of empowerment of women in the country and the effective role that women's play in national politics might be a compelling factor for such a laudable idea in New Zealand because the few female political champions can be instrumental to call for equity by making efforts to narrow the gender gap.

Australia ranked in the top ten on a number of indices purporting to measure gender equity in the International Labour Organisation Report, "Breaking through the Glass Ceiling" (Wirth, 2001, as cited in Davidson & Burke, 2004:225). This is evidenced by the available findings that 'Australia was the first Country in the World to give women both the right to vote and the right to stand for Parliament when the Commonwealth Parliament passed the Commonwealth Franchise Act in 1902' (Still, 2004:235). However, according to statistics it took forty-one years before women were elected to the Commonwealth Parliament, creating the longest time lag in the western world between women's right to stand and their achievement of parliamentary representation as indicated by the records. This is evidence that the Australian government and the political parties are sensitive to female representation and participation in their national politics. For instance, accordingly, in 1994, the Australia Labour Party adopted a motion to guarantee women a 35% share of winnable State and Federal seats by the year 2002 and established Emily's List in 1996 as a fundraising and support organization for women candidates and Members of Parliament. The party's target is for women to make up 50% of labour candidates. Similarly, Still's study further reveals that Australia's Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, established a Women's Candidates Forum to attract female



candidates for parliament with strategies focussing on the provision of training, support and community education to encourage women candidates and potential candidates. In fact, statistics in Australia's politics further indicate that after the 1998 election the Coalition Government had four women Ministers, five in Australia were prepared to present themselves forward as candidates and ready to go through gruelling pre-selection procedures, while others were receiving various forms of political education. The study of Still further concluded that despite the above improvements of Australia's women in national politics, more effort is needed for them to attain 50% representation in the country's Parliaments, either Commonwealth or Senate.

The gap in Australia and Ghana is very clear. In Australia, women are presenting themselves for more political elections as candidates and receiving political education to be elected into local government as well as occupying executive position in political parties; in Ghana, only very few women present themselves in national politics, that is why I agreed with Akpalu's (2001:75) findings that in 'Ghana there is an imbalance in political participation and that party structures of all political parties are male-dominated, almost all the executive positions of all parties could be described as traditional male positions'. A visit to the NPP & NDC party offices in the Upper West Region confirms Akpalu's view. In the National Patriotic Party (NPP) office, statistics revealed that at their party's national level, the Executives are 10, of which 3 are women representing 30%; this has a direct reflection at the regional level where only 1 woman serves among 8 Executive members in the region representing 12.5%. It was further discovered that there was no woman as Chairman or Secretary among the 10 constituencies in the Upper West Region of the party. However each constituency has a female organizer in addition to the Regional Women Organizer. This gap reflected in the National Democratic Party (NDC), at the Regional core Executive level of 7 members only 1 is a female representing 14%. This gap transcends to all the 10 party constituencies in the region where in the 14 members' executive in each constituency only 3 are females representing 21% each respectively. In all, out of the 140 NDC party executives in the Upper West Region 22% (31) are female executives in the party constituencies, against 78% male (NDC Regional Organiser, 2010). A clear indication that males dominate in the political decision making process because the two political parties have the largest followers (loyal supporters) in terms of membership in Ghana and



the above analysis have revealed the gender gap with respect to women's participation in national politics.

The work of Aycan and Karakas on Women in Turkey indicates that 'Turkey was the first Islamic country to grant women the right to vote and to be voted for' (2004:283). For instance, records indicate that political rights were given in the 1930s; that is, the right to vote and to participate in national politics. This implies that in Turkey, women were granted these rights earlier than their counterparts in many western countries. In spite of this great opportunity granted to halt the gender inequality in national politics in Turkey, there has never been a female President in the history of the republic of Turkey though some women were given cabinet positions to serve as a Prime Minister in the mid 1990s. However, still with the findings available it is evident that Turkey's constitutional policies are geared towards women's participation in national politics on the premise that women parliamentarians in Turkey have an elite background. This implies that they can forge ahead to break the gender imbalances in their national politics in the future.

In Africa, the situation on women's participation is worse and has remained bleak more than a decade after the First United Nations Conference on Women in 1975 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 (Gyimah and Thompson, 2008). For instance, South Africa portrays a level of political discrimination in national politics. According to available records, 'until the early 1990s, South Africa was dominated by apartheid, which seriously discriminated, segmented and segregated its society in many ways; more so in terms of gender and race' (Babita, 2004:290). This discrimination is seen from the typical example that during the apartheid era there was only one woman – Helen Suzman, in the Whites-only Parliament who served from 1953 until the late 1970s (approximately 17 years) (Davidson and Burke, 2004). This was a great barrier hindering women to participate in national politics. However, recent developments show that the current legislations and policies give impetus to women to call for equal representation and participation in national politics. For instance, currently, there are indicators that South Africa considers gender equality as one of the core issues in building democracy for post apartheid South Africa, with the high expectations that democracy will create greater opportunities for women to participate in national politics to enhance policy and decision making process. However, the 2009 Inter-



Parliamentary Union report indicates an impressive improvement of women in national politics in South Africa (Babita Mathur-Helm, 2004). The table below justified this argument.

Table 2.1 South African Parliamentary Elections - 2009

| Sex | Lower House | Upper House |
|--------|-------------|-------------|
| Male | 228(57%) | 38(70%) |
| Female | 172(43%) | 16(30%) |
| Total | 400 | 54 |

Source: Adapted from World Women in National Parliament, 2009.

The basic requirement of the Ghanaians constitution is that Ghana is a democratic state based on the principles of dignity of the human person, freedom emphasizing the respect for personal initiative and creativity, equality of all citizens, human rights and socialist in the sense that social responsibilities could be compromised if women's participation in politics continues to be poor (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). It is therefore humanly ideal to encourage women's participation in national politics as a measure of human dignity.

It is true that Ghana gained her independence alongside Malaysia in 1957 and since that time Malaysia passed the legal position, status and right of women by the Federal Constitution granting recognition and safeguarding Malaysian women's right to participate in the political and administrative aspects of their country. The question now is: was women's political right the same in Ghana? According to Ayee (2007) the political objective of decentralisation is emphasized by the 1992 Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy where the state is enjoined to make democracy a reality through the allocation of powers of government to regions and districts with the view of encouraging full participation in political decision making. This is not in full swing as compared to the Republic of Malaysia where women had the earliest support from government.

According to Mama's (2000) study on the National Machinery for Women in Africa, Liberia was the first African country to establish national structures for women immediately after her independence in 1946, led leading to the creation of the Liberia Women's Social and Political Movement to facilitate the training of



women in the political, economic and social fields to enhance women's active participation in national development. Tunisia and Egypt followed in 1956 and 1958 respectively to establish the National Union of Tunisian Women that was to ensure the participation of women in national development, enhance their political and economic status and make women to be conscious of their rights and duties. The Egyptian ruling party set up the Arab Socialist Union Women's Wing to create awareness of women on problems affecting women. All these were manifestations that women's role is significant in national development because the study finally concluded that these countries aimed at removing major legal obstacles to women's participation with no challenge to existing gender relations. In Ghana, Nkrumah in the 1st Republic recognised the significant political role of women by rewarding female supporters and appointing women in his cabinet, hence Tsikata (1986 as cited in Mama, 2000) in her research observed that the Convention People's Party owed much to the support of Ghanaian women's political achievement.

2.1.3 Motivational Factors for Female Participation in National Politics

The political participation and representation of women in national politics in Ghana cannot be effectively remembered without due recognition to one of the democratic principles that are enshrined in the constitution, that 'the state shall take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices' (Article 6, clause 5b:31). Nevertheless, in Ghana, there is still that margin of perception in some areas such as in my community of Lawra that politics belongs to men who do not fear political embarrassment; hence men dominate and dictate in Ghana's politics, this is because the findings of Tsikata (2000:14) on the subject of the State and National Machinery for women in Africa indicate that in a 'majority of study countries, the national machinery had not been able to implement much of their own action plans on gender policies'. To me, if democracy means a system of government where the people vote in elections to choose who will govern them, then there should be gender equality that would be motivating enough for females participation because the country is not exclusively for males and the sound opinion of women can contribute significantly to the development process of any country, therefore the need for adequate political gender dispensation.



According to George Padmore, Ghanaian women are 'being independent and enjoying absolute equality with men playing an important part in the economic life of the country, wielding substantial power and influence in the society' (Oquaye, 2004:315). This view was certainly opposed by Takyiwa (1987 as cited in Oquaye 2004) with her objection that in 'reality in Ghana power and independence are possessed by only a tiny percentage of women and even these women suffer from the traditional prejudice and beliefs' (Oquaye, 2004:315). Historical records in Ghana indicate that no woman participated in the Gold Coast Aborigine Right Protection Society (ARPS), the Gold Coast Legislative Council or the Fante Confederacy, the Watson Commission although women participated in the boycott of (Oquaye, 2004). Hence, the gap exists for this study, which has not been adequately researched, or has been largely overlooked in the literature.

As a measure to break this gap the CPP was very sensitive to women's political plight in Ghana and made a great stride to make a constitutional provision in their party constitution to have a women's section to cater for the special interests of women through their branches and also at least one woman in each of the executive committees (Oquaye, 2004). The CPP in Ghana was the first political party to encourage women to participate in national politics and they equally acknowledge the contributions of women in their party; this argument can be sealed with Nkrumah's observation that "the generous contributions the women made ensured the solidarity, cohesion and success of the Convention Peoples Party" (Oquaye, 2004:316). Furthermore, according to Oquaye, it was in 1969 that only one woman, Mrs Lydia Kugbulenu, entered into Parliament from the Upper Region now Upper East and Upper West Regions. The third Republic produced 5 women members of Parliament out of 140 and in the same republic only 1 woman Mrs Esther Ocloo was in the council of state.

One of the women's movements in Ghana that brought political consciousness to women in Ghana, especially in the rural areas, was the 31st December Women Movement (DWM) led by the first Lady of the Fourth Republic, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings. In a more non-partisan tone this movement re-awakened almost all women in Ghana from their political slumber through its total concern of empowering women on their political rights of participation and representation in national politics for gender equality. This women's movement called for total



liberation by any possible means of Ghanaian women for gender equality in all aspects of life including political participation and representation. With a glance at its aims and objectives, one can imagine the position of the Ghanaian women in terms of participation in national politics even after the CPP intervention. The movement's key issues were:

- "To arrest apathy, ignorance and prejudices against women
- "To mobilise women to participate in nation building and revolutionary process
- "To help in areas special to women including health, sanitation promotion of childcare facilities including nurseries, literacy campaigns, political education and literacy education.
- "To strike for the enactment of laws to protect women and children.
- "Above all the movement seeks to be a helper and advisor of women and all shall therefore take up problems affecting women and contribute to their solutions according to existing social conditions" (Oquaye, 2004:319).

As a matter of fact, the movement really worked seriously on political education as a means of encouraging women's political participation in national politics. For instance, on the political front, the movement considered political education very vital, performed creditably through rallies and fora by launching of platforms raising the consciousness of Ghanaian women on national politics. Political participation was one of the key issues significant to them. All efforts that were made at that time by the movement can be concluded as primarily aimed at Ghanaian women's participation and being represented in national politics.

It is equally motivating to women in the findings of Mama (2000) which indicate that women's groups in Botswana have influenced the government to introduce legal reforms to advance women's citizenship rights and in Nigeria various women's groups such as the Federation of International Democratic Lawyers, Women in Nigeria, the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria, the Federation of Muslim Women have successfully carried out well targeted advocacy on a number of gender issues (ABANTU, 1997). These advocacies are in line with the Kenyan Centre for Collaborative Research and Action, and the Uganda Gender Resource Centre where gender issues are paramount including gender perspective programmes.



2.1.4 Marriage as Social Barrier to Women's Political Development

The study of Awumbila (2001:33) on women and gender equality in Ghana established that 'gender disparities are prevalent in Ghana and closing the gender gap to enhance women's participation in development is essential not only for building a just society but also as a pre-requisite for political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among people on sustainable basis'. Indeed, her findings arguably justify the low level of women's participation in national politics in Ghana as a gap with Lawra District being no exception. This view holds so long as the individual Ghanaian is not ready to discard gender disparities at all areas including national politics. It is obvious to me that so long as we continue to accept and practice gender inequalities in our communities the gap of the participation level of women in national politics might continue to exist unless pragmatic measures are put in place for a new paradigm shift in this direction. Awumbila's study revealed that under colonialism there was no attempt to address the position and status of women in traditional society. That is to say the colonial policy was not interested in the position and status of women in national politics but rather centred mainly on agricultural export, trade and mining. This limited and created the gap of few or no women's participation and representation in national politics which continue to reflect in this modern era.

According to Cusack (1999) some direct barriers identified by women include economic dependence on men, fear of divorce, ignorance, access to information, and lack of reporting channels. In fact, Fetenu (2000:2) confirms this assertion by stating that 'one of the main reasons for the minimal participation of women in politics in general and grass root participation in particular has been the assumption that women are subordinate to men as a consequence of social and institutional discrimination'. It is not a false premise to state that lack of attention to gender equality is rooted in colonialism. This was evident with the conclusions of Pope John Paul II (1994:1) on 'Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone' of the Catholic Church in its practice and doctrine proclaiming that the 'Priestly Ordination (Ordinatio Sacerdotalis) in the Catholic Church has from the beginning always been reserved to men alone and this tradition has also been faithfully maintained by the Oriental Churches'. In spite of other theological reasons that might be assigned to this proclamation to the researcher it falls short, if one considers the dedication and effectiveness of the modern women in recent times.



Very interestingly, this transcends to the traditional religion in the Lawra District where women are not allowed to pacify or sacrifice the traditional gods (kpieme) either in the father's house or in the marital house. The situation is not quite different in the Muslim religion where women are not allowed to lead the congregational prayers in the presence of men. It therefore implies that women's discrimination and participation is historical from the inception of man because Gadzekpo (2005:279) on his study on 'The Hidden History of Women in Ghanaian Print Culture' indicate that 'Conventional history and its discourses were constructed around the figures of illustrious men and important male centred events'. However, the dynamism of the Ghanaian society in the modern era can make it conventional to enable women to participate in the decision making process after all modern democracy is calling for an all inclusive governance, though the gender gap is historical from the findings above.

2.1.5 Discriminations in Political Party Structures

A lot of debates and views are being expressed by researchers on the issue of political discrimination. Akpalu (2001:74) stated that in 'view of the absence of women in decision-making at all levels in Ghana, at the district level of governance, parliament and other institutions where decisions affecting the whole nation are taken, it became necessary that this imbalance be addressed with the dawn of the democratic constitutional era in 1992.' In fact, true democracy rests on the people (both male and female) and there should not be discrimination in the decision making process that might affect development of all kind including women's political development.

Interestingly, Akpalu (2001:75-76) further observed that the 'party structures of all political parties are male-dominated, that almost all the executive positions in all the political parties could be described as traditional male positions'. This is an indication that in Ghana and for that matter in Lawra District women's participation in national politics is poor, low and ineffective compared to men. The questions that concern me continue to be: What accounts for this gender gap (low participation of women in national politics) in the study District? This and many more questions put me in a very thoughtful situation and eagerness to investigate as in research.



It is also true that very often political parties prefer ethnic compromises to gender compromises. This observation was clear in all Presidential elections in Ghana where a lot of considerations were given to ethnicity to the neglect of gender equity. For instance the third republic was led by President Hilla Limann a Sissala by tribe, he was assisted by Vice President Dr de-Graft Johnson a Fante by tribe. Then during the fourth Republic President Jerry John Rawlings an Ewe by tribe was assisted by Vice President Ekow Nkansah Arkaarh a Fante by tribe, also during the second term of Jerry John Rawlings he again chose a Fante Professor John Evans Atta Mills as his Vice President. Again during the reign of President John Agyakum Kufour an Asante by tribe (2000-2008) his Vice President Aliu Mahama, is a Dagomba by tribe. The current (2009) President John Evans Atta Mills a Fante by tribe is assisted by Vice President John Dramani Mahama, a Gonja by tribe. With these examples it is evident that considerations were accorded to ethnicity which always favoured only males. These situations continue to widen the gender disparities gap making women voiceless and powerless.

The view of Abagre (2004) acknowledged the significant role that few northern women who were able to enter parliament played not only for their constituencies but also fighting for the welfare of women in general. Madam Catherine Tedom and Madam Lydia Akanbodiipo, pioneers from the north into national politics, testify their determination to overcome all barriers of gender to become MPs for Builsa (Akanbodiipo) through the National Alliance Party and Madam Tedom for Pagachiana constituency through the then Progress Party in 1969. Madam Akanbodiipo was appointed to the available position as a Chief Whip in the opposition side. This is very significant and historic to women in Ghana with their popular adage that 'what men can do, women can do it, even better'.

2.1.6 Women and District Assembly Elections in Lawra District

The perception of politics in Ghana by the different ethnic groups is an important factor when considering the inclusion or exclusion of women in national politics. The gender role culturally has relegated women to mere housewives and mothers who are ready to execute men ideas in the home and allow men in the public sphere for politics (Bari, 2005). This is one of the vital factors that determine the level of women's political participation in Ghana, in northern Ghana, and particularly in Lawra District. This is evident by the findings of Desiree (2004) which lamented on



the question of cultural subjectivity and political expression of women in national politics. Marnia (2005:73) confirms this opinion by referring to a book entitled 'The House of Obedience' in the Arab feminist World where obedience of men and men's ideas by women is considered paramount. Transcending as a reflection on an acute angle of this obedience in the Upper West Region, statistics from the Lawra District Assembly confirmed that the current 2009 Assembly Session composed of 17% (9) of females as against 83% (43) of males. Indeed, there were no discrepancies to the findings of Kunbour and that of Marnia.

The findings of Kunbour (2009) on his book entitled Law and Decentralised Development in Northern Ghana indicate the level of marginalisation of women in national politics at the District Assemblies.

Table 2.2 Gender of Assembly Members in Upper West Region.

| District | Female | Male | Elected | Appointed |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| Lawra | 5 | 34 | 23(0) | 16(5) |
| Wa | 7 | 72 | 55(0) | 24(7) |
| Jirapa | 8 | 53 | 42(2) | 19(6) |
| Sissala | 3 | 40 | 40(0) | 3(1) |
| Nadowli | 5 | 34 | 23(0) | 16(5) |
| TOTAL | 28 | 246 | 196(4) | 88 (24) |

Source: Kunbour, 2009:355.

The figures in brackets represent elected or appointed females in the District Assembly.

A critical look at the above table shows the low representation and participation of women in the region when it comes to decision making in national politics, except Jirapa 42(2) which is still very small. A sign of women's cultural obedience to men is visible. This is a clear indication that women are politically marginalised in the District Assemblies in the Upper West Region since its inception in 1992 by the constitution of Ghana.

The low representation and participation of women's in national politics could be traced as far back as the early politics in the district in the 1950s by the study of Lentz (2007) where national politics in the district was purely for only men as shown in the table below.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section elaborates on a multi-faceted approach that was employed to direct the research from the beginning to the final stage. It provides a framework within which the study was conducted. It deals with research design, sample population/size, data collection and instruments used for collecting data. It concludes with data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Both quantitative and qualitative research designs were used in this study. Just as Benni (2000, as cited in Sarandakos 2005:113) stated, 'quantitative research design helps researchers to know what they intend to study, what settings to investigate, how and when, which actors to approach, which processes to consider, what type of events to register and what instruments to employ'. Indeed, the 'qualitative research design enabled the researcher to show commitment to viewing the social world (social actions and events) of the people being studied' (Blaikie, 2008:231). Hence, my commitment involved the discovering of the opinions of respondents on the participation of women in national politics in the Lawra District.

Also, the qualitative and quantitative design was very significant to me because it gave me the opportunity to produce a detailed description and analysis of the social opinion of the people in positions of authority and the general public (respondents) on the participation of women in national politics in the two traditional areas (Nandom and Lawra) in the District through the use of questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions to provide an understanding on the political opinion of the people on women in the District.

This research considered the general opinion of respondents on women's participation in national politics and compared the opinions and perceptions of two groups (men and women) on women's participation in politics in Lawra District. The results between them were analysed both in quantitative and qualitative terms to ascertain how results from the registered voters in the general community differ in their responses from people in positions of authority. The study tried to identify the level of participation of women in national politics in the District. About 90% of the study focussed on the literate registered voters' population while the remaining 10%



was on the registered voters' population who are illiterates. This is because as a citizen of the District it was realised that very few or a negligible number of illiterates (the people who did not have the opportunity for formal education) can independently respond to the questionnaires without any influence and many interpretations.

3.3 Sample Population/Size

According to Twumasi (2005:19), 'sampling technique is important in social research. It describes how wide coverage is acceptable, types of respondents available to provide answers to the research questions, the typical group of respondents available, the typical community, or village, all these are relevant questions to the researcher in selecting sample population/size for the study'. Based on that premise the researcher had to select a sample population by using the sample size formulae on the population of the registered voters in the Constituency who are present as at the time of the study. That was necessary because a majority of the people often migrate as seasonal migrants in the District at certain times of the year.

Lawra District has a total population of 87,525 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000 PHC) and out of that number 55% (48,395) were registered voters (Electoral Commission Lawra, 2008). Statistics available from the Electoral Commission in the District further indicated that the total electoral areas in the District were 36, and the numbers of the polling stations were 135, and there were 48,395 registered voters (Electoral Commission, 2008). Once the study was interested in women's participation in national politics, the researcher drew the sample size from the registered voters, in the 135 polling stations who were present and qualified by virtue of their registration as voters in the Constituency. Using these numbers in the sample size formula, I arrived at the initial sample size of **381** survey respondents of the registered voters. Rather than surveying the entire population, a sample was selected for practical purposes. This implies that it was impossible on the part of the researcher for the study to cover all the registered voters in the selected areas who were present and qualified because of the high numerical strength involved and the distance of some polling stations coupled with the non-availability of some registered voters at that particular time of the year when the study was conducted.



The study was conducted using purposive sampling (strictly on people who are registered voters) in Nandom and Lawra Traditional areas as a Constituency and a District. I selected households systematically. I further used simple random sampling by allowing respondents within each household to pick yes or no cards from a box as a pre-qualification to respond to the questionnaire from the researcher. This implies that out of the 762 ballot papers if a registered voter picks yes he or she becomes my participant to respond to the questionnaire but if no he or she does not respond to the questionnaire. This was done until the 381 respondents on the questionnaire were obtained in two traditional areas.

3.4 Data Collection

It is significant that all social research involves decisions about how to collect data from the field for analysis and interpretations to enable the study to meet its purpose and target as designed by the researcher. Therefore, whatever the source or sources of data may be on the topic being studied, there is the need to consider the type of data, and form of data, the time dimension and the methods of data collection (Blaikie, 2008). In this regard, it was ideal for the researcher to basically employ two main types of data: primary data and secondary data. The primary data constituted the empirical data that were collected from the field for analysis. These data were collected by using instruments such as questionnaires, structured and semi – structured interviews and focus group discussions in the study area.

The secondary data were obtained from books, magazines, journals, and internet that were of relevance to the topic. Significantly, through the primary and secondary data the researcher was able to obtain the appropriate data for analysis and interpretations in order to justify the issue under investigation in the Lawra District.

The following were the ways by which the empirical data were collected in the field for the study.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Twumasi (2005:54) concluded that ‘as a method of data collection, the questionnaire is an efficient way to collect statistically quantifiable information’. This conclusion was very useful to me because it gave me an opportunity to frame and write down



formal questions for the respondents to provide answers to them and many respondents were reached within a reasonable time in the field.

Also, as indicated by Osuala (2007:268), 'questionnaires are advantageous whenever the sample size is large enough to make it uneconomical for reasons of time and funds to observe or interview every subject'. In this regard questionnaires were used to collect the primary data. The questionnaires were more appropriate to me because of the large numbers involved and more so the literates among them could easily provide responses to the questionnaire without much difficulty.

The questionnaires used were pre-tested in the study area by people at random as the researcher solicits the people for their attention in order to remove ambiguous questions that could pose a problem to the respondents and the researcher as well in the field. After the preliminary visits in the field the researcher and his assistant finally went to the field in succession from December to March 2010 to administer the 381 questionnaires in the District. The researcher and his assistant personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents' at the most convenient time to both parties. Each questionnaire was composed of two parts A and B; the former consisted of the introduction, instruction and socio-demographic characteristics, while the latter consisted of the scale with the rest of the questions. In all, 40 questions in one questionnaire were combining both open-ended and closed-ended. (See Appendix A for sample questionnaire).

After collecting the questionnaires, each questionnaire was coded with three digits starting from 001N to 194N for Nandom traditional area and 001L to 187L for Lawra traditional area in order to avoid skipping and to obtained 381 questionnaires.

3.4.2. Interviews

Aside from questionnaires, the researcher also conducted personal interviews with 20 people in positions of authority in the District by purposive sampling technique. These people were specifically selected based on their position of authority and knowledge on national politics and women's participation. The interviewees were as follows:

- National Patriotic Party Constituency Chairman
- National Democratic Party Constituency Women Organizer



- Convention People's Party Constituency Chairman
- Democratic People's Party Secretary
- Secretary to the Office of Member of Parliament
- Divisional Chief of Nandom Kpaa
- Gender Desk Officer
- Bu Assemblyman
- The Parish Priest of Our Lady of Nativity Church
- National Patriotic Party Constituency Women Organizer
- National Democratic Party Constituency Chairman
- Zonal Chairperson of Christians Mothers Association
- Prominent Businessmen
- Four (4) Headmasters
- Four (4) Teachers

On average, the researcher spent one hour on each interviewee. (See Appendix B for a sample interview guide)

In choosing participants for focus groups, I first selected 40 households systematically (two out of every five households). Then, the participants for interviews and the focus group discussions were determined by balloting out of 40 cards labelled yes or no as the researcher and assistant arrived at the study area. A total of 20 people were selected and interviewed.

Osuala (2007) posits that personal interviewing is the most useful method of data collection in a social survey. In fact, this study could not have been possible without the use of personal interviews as a necessary tool for this study because it enabled the researcher to solicit from people in positions of authority, their knowledge and perceptions about female participation in national politics in the Lawra District. The observation of Osuala is in line with Twumasi (2005) when he indicated that interview is a method of field investigation whereby the researcher interacts with respondents to investigate through interview questions the opinions of respondents in order to obtain responses to his research problem under investigation. This granted me the courage to organise an interview schedule that was made up of 10 specific interview questions drawn from the research questions in relation to the



research problem. These questions were made up of highly structured to unstructured. In fact, the interview method was more appropriate and significant to the researcher because he was in the position to sense any situation and adapted his questions to suit the people involved in the field that made him obtain the appropriate data through purposeful discussions in a non-threatening manner (Twumasi, 2005). Indeed, because interviews are significant to researchers, a lot of ethical considerations (privacy, convenience and confidentiality) were observed as the researcher granted the individual interviews to respondents (Sarantakos, 2005).

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

‘Focus Group Discussion allows for group interaction and provides greater insight into why opinions are held’ (Blaikie, 2008:234). Also, Krueger (1998:18, as cited in Blaike 2007:235) defined focus group as a ‘carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment’. In this regard the researcher was able to bring different people who are knowledgeable on the topic to seek their opinions in the District. The focus group was cost effective, had flexibility and face validity because it gave the researcher an insight into the real life situation in capturing the reality from the group on their opinion on the topic at stake (Twumasi, 2005). The researcher conducted 5 focus group discussions in the District comprising men and women and 30 people participated in the focus group discussions. That brought the entire total sample size to be **431** representing 0.89% of the targeted population in the District.

The groups were:

| | | |
|---------|------------------|-------------------|
| Group 1 | Lawra | Women only (6) |
| Group 2 | Lawra | Men only (6) |
| Group 3 | Nandom | Women only (6) |
| Group 4 | Nandom | Men only (6) |
| Group 5 | Lawra and Nandom | Men and Women (6) |

These groups’ discussions enabled the researcher to examine group’s perceptions, and men and women’s perceptions on women’s participation in national politics (See Appendix C for focus group discussion guide).



3.5 Data Analysis

With particular reference to Twumasi (2005:86), 'analysis means a critical examination of material in order to understand its parts and relationship and to discover its trends'. It was on that basis that the researcher studied the nature of the material in its constituent parts to determine its essential features and their relations with due regards to the participation of women in national politics in the Lawra District. In fact, Twumasi's view is very significant to me as that of Sarantakos (2005:347) who concluded that 'data analysis is a dynamic process which incorporates several elements of the research process, and is certainly not deferred after data collection is fully completed.' Hence, after collecting both primary and secondary data the quantitative data were analysed by the assistance of using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in terms of percentages and absolute numbers while the qualitative data employed analysis by examining the main features of the responded data from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups discussions on women's participation in national politics in the Lawra District.

The concept of triangulation as a technique was applied to enable the researcher to obtain the appropriate data because it is a better technique which provides more and better evidence from which researchers can construct meaningful propositions about the social world (Mathison 1988, as cited in Blaikie 2008).

These approaches that were employed were relevant to the study because it involved the collection of extensive data to produce an understanding of the subject being studied. Therefore, the methods allowed the researcher to interact creatively with the phenomena and respondents under investigation. Again, once the researcher did not have any previous knowledge on the subject under study, these methods ensured an in-depth study on the research topic.



THE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the various findings that were obtained in the field from Nandom and Lawra traditional areas that constitute the Lawra constituency and District. It focuses on a number of issues from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The findings are put into sub-headings such as socio-demographic characteristics, some quantitative analysis of the survey on interest of women in national politics, communal practices that limit women in national politics, national politics and women's interest, perceptions from both men and women toward women in national politics, women's access to political information channels, why some men accept or do not accept their wives to go into national politics, and motivational factors to improve women's participation in national politics. The findings from the questionnaire will begin first, followed by findings from the interviews, and then focus groups. Although five focus groups were conducted, four had distinctive findings; the fifth focus group mirrored the rest, and therefore will not warrant separate discussion. At times, evidence from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups will be considered simultaneously, as each complements the other.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The table below is drawn from Section A of the questionnaire, and indicates the characteristics of respondents in the District by traditional area, sex, religion, literacy and employment. In all, 381 participants responded to the questionnaires in the two traditional areas in the District with 194 participants from Nandom traditional area and 187 participants from Lawra traditional area.





Table 4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Traditional Area | Sex | | Religion | | | Literacy | | Employment | |
|------------------|------|--------|------------|-------|-------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Christians | Islam | Traditional | Literate | Illiterate | Employed | Unemployed |
| Nandom | 50% | 50% | 54% | 20% | 26% | 65% | 35% | 52% | 48% |
| | (97) | (97) | (104) | (40) | (50) | (126) | (68) | (99) | (95) |
| Lawra | 50% | 50% | 27% | 22% | 51% | 68% | 32% | 67% | 33% |
| | (93) | (94) | (50) | (42) | (95) | (127) | (60) | (125) | (62) |

Source: Field Survey, Feb. 2010

The chi-square test is used to test the significance of the findings on the participation level of women in national politics in the District. Therefore at 95% confidence level, the result is significant that women in the District prefer men to go into national politics than women as at the time of this investigation. Based on the information in the table, 48.3% (184) of all respondents, including 58.1% (100) of all female respondents and 40.2% (84) of all male respondents, agreed with the view that women prefer men to go into national politics. This is an indication that a majority of women in Lawra District perceived national politics to be a reserve for males but not for females. This was equally observed from the findings of the interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 4.2 Women Prefer Men to Go into National Politics

| Scale | Gender | | | |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| | Male | Percent (%) | Female | Percent (%) |
| Strongly Agree | 84 | 40.2% | 100 | 58.1% |
| Agree | 55 | 26.3% | 23 | 13.4% |
| Strongly Disagree | 62 | 29.7% | 38 | 22.1% |
| Disagree | 6 | 2.9% | 9 | 5.2% |
| No opinion | 2 | 1.0% | 2 | 1.2% |
| Total | 209 | 100% | 172 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, Feb. 2010

Chi-Square =277.543. df = 4, P < 0.05, significant

From the table below, 58.3% (120) of the respondents who were women agreed that women are afraid in a predominantly male political environment to comfortably compete with their male counterparts in national politics. This compares with 27.4% (48) of male respondents who agreed. In a similar situation the chi-square table gives a result greater than 0.05 that gives an indication that there is a relationship between the opinions of women and men on the position of women's participation in national politics in the District, hence the significance of the findings. This could be premised on the culturally subordinate position of women in the communities which is confirmed from the interviews and focus groups discussions. It is interesting to



indicate that not until women take up serious political participation in national politics, the issue of gender equity in national politics would continue to suffer in the Lawra District once women's participation continued to be low.

Table 4.3 Women Are Afraid in a Male Politically Dominated Environment to Go into National Politics

| Scale | Gender | | | |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| | Male | Percent (%) | Female | Percent (%) |
| Strongly Agree | 48 | 27.40% | 120 | 58.30% |
| Agree | 19 | 10.90% | 48 | 23.30% |
| Strongly Disagree | 92 | 52.60% | 25 | 12.10% |
| Disagree | 10 | 5.70% | 6 | 2.90% |
| No opinion | 6 | 3.40% | 7 | 3.40% |
| Total | 175 | 100% | 206 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, Feb. 2010

Chi-Square = 233.528. df = 4, $P < 0.05$, significant

From the table above, many of the respondents disagreed with the view that men prevent women from participating in national politics. For example, 62.1% (113) of respondents who were males and 40.7% (81) of female respondents representing 194 respondents disagreed making it very interesting. This is significant on the evidence of the chi-square test. Although the political environment is open to equal participation of both males and females, 60.4% (230) of all respondents disagreed or somewhat disagreed that men prevent women from participating in national politics in the District.

Table 4.4 Men Prevent Women from Going into National Politics

| Scale | Gender | | | |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| | Male | Percent (%) | Female | Percent (%) |
| Strongly Agree | 33 | 18.10% | 56 | 28.10% |
| Agree | 14 | 7.70% | 40 | 20.10% |
| Strongly Disagree | 113 | 62.10% | 81 | 40.70% |
| Disagree | 20 | 11.00% | 16 | 8.40% |
| No opinion | 2 | 1.10% | 6 | 3.00% |
| Total | 182 | 100% | 199 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, Feb. 2010

Chi-Square = 272.976. df = 4, $P < 0.05$, significant



The data from the table below revealed that only 47.2% (92) of female respondents and 47.8% (89) of male respondents agreed with the question that women in Lawra District are not interested in national politics, representing a total of 47.5% of all respondents. The chi-square test indicates that the interest of women in national politics is statistically significant. It is very interesting with the revelations from the findings that a total of 259 people (68.0%) of the total respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with the view that women are not interested in national politics. In fact, there may be the need to put in certain proactive mechanisms that could speed up women's political participation rather than just for women being interested but would not participate in national politics.

Table 4.5 Women in Lawra District Are Not Interested in National Politics

| Scale | Gender | | | |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| | Male | Percent (%) | Female | Percent (%) |
| Strongly Agree | 92 | 47.2% | 89 | 47.8% |
| Agree | 48 | 24.6% | 30 | 16.1% |
| Strongly Disagree | 38 | 19.5% | 48 | 25.8% |
| Disagree | 11 | 5.6% | 14 | 7.5% |
| No opinion | 6 | 3.1% | 5 | 2.7% |
| Total | 195 | 100% | 186 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, Feb. 2010.

Chi-Square = 450.325. df = 4, $P < 0.05$, significant

4.3 The Interest of Men on Women Going into National Politics

This section of the findings begins with the qualitative aspect from responses to questions 32 to 40 of the questionnaire. Questions 32 and 37 of the questionnaire revealed the varied reasons from men who are not ready to accept women to go into national politics. Despite the Constitutional rights of the individual in Ghana to participate in politics of his or her country either to vote or be voted for with the minimum qualification, women's participation in national politics is low, as indicated by the questionnaire, focus group discussions and the interviews conducted. According to the findings on question 37 on the questionnaire, roughly half of all respondents who were males indicated the following perceptions that:



women in a high position do not respect their husbands and other men, women have very little courage to fight for development for their communities, and women are not as politically informed as men. The men continued to claim that women's place is in the home and that women politicians tend to punish men when men reject their opinion. In terms of women who are married, the perceptions indicated that women can easily change their marital mind to different men when men put pressure on them. As if that were not enough, men would have to perform the domestic responsibilities of women if women are into national politics. Over ten times, respondents wrote comments on the questionnaire such as 'many people would hate my wife and insult her because politics is for many people', coupled with the fear of marital litigation as a result of political power and that political power will over empower women and they can be very dangerous to men. In summary, approximately half of all married men contacted for the study do not support the idea of their wives participating in national politics. This is reflected further in some of the interviews and focus group discussions.

On the contrary, some men did indicate that they would be willing to accept their wives to go into national politics despite all the odds. Such men concluded with the concerns from the questionnaires that what men can do women can equally do especially when they have the pre-requisite qualification, women are more truthful and reliable than men, women equally need political exposure, there is no legislation debarring women's participation in national politics in Ghana, women are more sensitive to people's plight in the communities than men, women use limited resources better and if that is the choice of the electorate, why not allow them to go into national politics. The concerns further indicated that the issue of gender equality would not be realised and would continue to suffer if women are not encouraged to fairly participate where their representation falls short and one of such areas is national politics particularly in Lawra District. In line with that it is time for men in the District to bury the social stigma that a woman's place is in the home and the habit of constant domineering over women. In response to question 40 on the questionnaire, a common suggestion was that the political exposure and political lifestyle of a woman in national politics can model a lot of women including men more than a man. This is in conformity with the renowned saying that "if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation" by Dr. James Kwegyir Anggrey (Sampson, 1969).



4.4 Communal Practices that Limit Women's Participation in National Politics

It was realised from questions 38 and 39 on the questionnaire that there were certain cultural practices in the communities that limit women's participation in national politics. These include marriage, childcare, domestic chores, resource ownership and level of literacy. In response to these questions, the findings from the questionnaire revealed that marriage and its practices contribute to the low participation of women in national politics. Overwhelming majorities of both male and female respondents indicated that marriage is a barrier to women who want to go into national politics, as evidenced from open-ended responses to questions 38 and 39. A frequent explanation was that, customarily, the woman after marriage takes instructions from the man and if the man does not permit her to go into national politics she would never make the attempt to do so on her own; if she violates the instructions of the man, the woman risks her marriage and that can lead to divorce or separation. This was also evident in the interview with Naa Kuuyelleh 11, when he concluded that 'I would not allow my wife to go into national politics because I need attention and if she risks she will be calling for a divorce or a second wife in addition to her'. The opinion of the Chief was not different with the findings of Cusack (1999) in the literature when he indicated that some direct barriers identified by women included economic dependence and fear of divorce from men. This issue is a barrier in the District because statistics from 1954 to 2008 Parliamentary elections indicate that no woman contested in any of the political parties for a Parliamentary seat (Electoral Commission of Ghana). Based on this evidence it is sufficient to conclude that marriage as a cultural practice in the study area has an effect on women's participation in national politics.

Childcare and birth spacing were also found to be a limiting factor for women's participation in national politics. This was evident in the responses to open-ended questions: an overwhelming majority of women, and roughly half of all men respondents, volunteered that birth and childcare is a challenge to women's participation in national politics. In the traditional communities women are more responsible for the good and regular care of children than men, because women spend more time with children, feed and clothe them all day long. The duty of the man traditionally is to provide the raw food or make it available to the woman, the converting of these raw food materials into edibles are not the business of men in the traditional area. One can imagine the busy role of women in childcare if coupled



with poor birth spacing of children; this makes women have very little time to think of their political development in national politics.

Domestic chores and farm work were also identified as some of the cultural practices that limit women to participate in national politics. In fact, most male and female respondents indicated in their open-ended responses on the questionnaire that domestic chores and farm work affect women's participation. In the Lawra District women are always seen being very busy with their domestic chores as well as in the farm work especially in the rainy season. This according to women has a negative reflection on their level of participation in national politics. The women in the District work throughout the whole year from one periodic season to another having very little time for politics, hence their low participation in national politics and this is evident at the Lawra District Assembly where women constituted only about 12.8% (Kunbour, 2005) as members of the assembly which falls short of Constitutional requirement of 15% of women in the assembly.

Poor ownership of resources is a cultural factor that limits women's participation in national politics. In the District it was found from the questionnaire that a majority of women do not own any tangible resources that can easily be converted into money for immediate use in national politics. Traditionally, the ownership of resources customarily turns to favour men over women. It was very interesting to realise that even though the couple work together to acquire the resources the complete ownership of these resources in the family customarily belongs to the man. This is because the position of a man in the family is traditionally the head granting power to have a lot of influence in the ownership of resources.

In fact one significant finding that was discovered was the literacy level of the people in the District. The questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions indicated that the illiteracy level of the women in the District was high and that was confirmed by finding 73.6% high (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000) resulting in unemployment. At the focus group and interview discussions it was estimated by respondents that about 70% of the women are not in any gainful employment that can earn them sufficient income to enable women to achieve their political ambition, if any. The income earning occupation traditionally are the local cakes making, local beverage, selling of shea butter and trading in food crops which is not always



sufficient for consumption as a result of poor rains and poor harvest. This puts women at a disadvantage to mobilise sufficient funds to unearth their political potentials by participation in national politics as men in the area.

4.5 National Politics and Women's Interest in Lawra District

The study in the District on question 39 revealed two dimensions of interest; some women are not interested in national politics while others concluded that they have the political potentials and are interested. Below are the different interests.

From the questionnaire, there is a high level of discrimination among women themselves in national politics. This discrimination is reportedly centred on sheer envy to the extent that a majority of women do not vote for fellow women who solicit their votes to go into national politics such as District Chief Executive, Member of Parliament and Women Organizers positions. This was very common among the responses from the questionnaires with roughly two thirds of all respondents volunteering that women's political discrimination against women result to the lack of interest and participation in national politics. This is an indication that the perception that the political lifestyle in the District continued to be centred on men, and this is reflected on the conclusion that 'conventional history and its discourses were constructed around the figures of illustrious men and important male centred events' (Gadzekpo, 2005:279) such as national politics, because women do not envy men who are in national politics but rather their female counterparts. Hence males dominate in national politics in the District. This is evident with the available statistics of the 1954 and 2008 Parliamentary election results where only males contested (Lentz, 2007).

As part of the effect of high illiteracy, the issue of qualification was found to be one of the major obstacles. Many women in the Lawra District did not possess the prerequisite political qualification that can permit them to comfortably go into national politics without hesitation. The general observation from the questionnaire was that a majority of the women in the District are illiterates and would certainly not be interested in national politics because, in Ghana, one becomes comfortable in national politics if he/she is a literate who can be well-informed to understand government policies, programmes and projects, among others. This was evident in question 39 as stated earlier above on communal practices in the community.



Indeed, the overwhelming majority of respondents in the District identified without prompting that bankruptcy is a limiting factor on women's political interest and participation. This is evident with the World Bank observation that women are usually at a disadvantage as a result of their low level of education, especially mothers (World Bank, 2005) which certainly affect women's source of income. It was further indicated from the questionnaire that the main sources of income generating activities in which women in the District engage themselves include pito (local beverage) brewing, koose (local cakes) making, and selling of firewood. These earned them a very minimal income that cannot sustain their livelihood, let alone to compete in national politics which is very expensive because individual candidates would have to sponsor political campaigns and rallies throughout the District. This was from question 23. Respondents volunteered that women do not own any reasonable resources that can be quantified and converted monetarily to enable women to sponsor political rallies and campaigns. The poor financial condition affects women because in national politics the popularity of a candidate mostly depends on how regular one markets himself or herself through political rallies and campaigns from the communities. Hence, national politics is very expensive to women in the Lawra District.

The findings confirmed that traditional cultural practices on gender perceptions in national politics as indicated in the conceptual framework in Chapter One do limit the interest of women in national politics. It was quite interesting to me that most respondents who were women in the District felt that women culturally are subordinate to men. In the District, traditionally, a woman is considered to be a subordinate to man and should occupy a subordinate position and play a subordinate role in all aspects of her life including national politics. This cultural perception agreed with Bari's (2005) conclusion that culture relegated women to mere housewives and mothers who are ready to execute men's ideas. This perception is fundamentally entrenched in the District to the extent that national politics is perceived to be preserved for males but not females.

In the questionnaire, especially on question 36, the study established that fear, shyness and the unreliable nature of national politics in Ghana contribute immensely to limit women's interest in national politics in the District. While some women supported this view, some disagreed. The perception from those who supported the



view was that, women often fear that the electorate may not vote for them and fear again that their party may not win the 51% plus one (1) popular vote to meet the constitutional mandate for winning the election in Ghana. Some simply feel shy in public and are not ready to participate in national politics while others perceived national politics to be unreliable with minimal truth telling and once they are not ready to lie to the electorate and the general public they shelve their interest in national politics. This problem can be traced to the cultural upbringing of women in the District, because women are trained and are expected to be in 'The House of Obedience' (Marnia, 2005:73) where they are only expected to obey but not to challenge men in many fields such as national politics.

Generally, the open-ended responses from question 38 indicates that women in the District see national politics as a means of vacating the home which many are not ready to do for fear of losing their husbands, children and other few resources that make up their womanhood. This finding is consistent with the idea that women prefer not to distance themselves from their family members, hence they view national politics as a distant issue that would take them away from their families, or that may result to divorce, separation and irresponsibility as indicated by Cusack (1999). This contributes to the unequal participation of women in the Lawra District Assembly.

The argument in the field from the questionnaire on question 34 indicated that a majority of the men do not give political support to women or encourage women to participate in national politics' because men do not see the need to support a woman who is a subordinate and even if supported could challenge men's superiority. The opinion was that even the few men that do support the few women are seen as cultural deviants who sexually harass women to take undue advantage over them. This was evident in the interviews and focus group discussions. This perception made women convinced that national politics is not good for women especially to those women who want to forever be loyal to their husbands.

Participants also volunteered in their open-ended responses that time is a limiting factor to women's interest and participation in national politics. According to them women are mostly busy with their domestic work day in day out to the extent that they have little time for their own political development. This goes to confirm the



United Nations Report that 'Women perform two-thirds of the world's work' (cited in Flynn, 2002:60). The questionnaire revealed the perception from women that national politics takes a lot of time during campaigns and the office duties when in office. According to a majority of the women during the females' focus group discussions, politicians are always busy with political matters to the neglect of other family issues and as women the family issues are of priority to them; this was equally observed in the open-ended responses to question 33 of the questionnaire. For example, some women stated that they prefer to spend time at home and with their families than enter into national politics. Perhaps this perception and other obstacles accounted for the low participation of women in the 2008 Parliamentary election in the Lawra District where no single woman contested as a Parliamentary candidate (Electoral Commission, Ghana 2009).

It was also observed that political violence deters women's interest in national politics. According to many of the open-ended responses on the questionnaire, the violence always emanates from the unfriendly expressions of supporters from the various parties as they campaign for more supporters. As a result, women are deterred from national politics. It was quite evident from the interviews and the focus group discussions that women culturally cannot abuse men, especially their husbands in their political trial.

The findings from the questionnaire also indicate that many political parties in the District hardly support women candidates vigorously. This was evident from the frequency of occurrence of the responses. According to the respondents on the interviews, political parties have no clear constitutional set-ups for women's participation within the party. This contradicts with the interviews with party chairmen when a majority indicated that at least 5% of their party's constitutions cater for women's participation. A clear gender discrimination in party politics in the District.

It was also reported from the questionnaire that lack of voter's education coupled with insufficient contacts with politicians, especially in the rural communities, accounts for women's poor or lack of interest in national politics. Women and men contacted often cited instances where over the years their MPs failed to visit them after the elections and that contribute significantly to limit women's interest because



one of the main sources of political information channels found in the District is the regular physical interactions through word of mouth with MPs. The lack of constant political contact creates a political information vacuum in terms of women's political interest, because a majority of women have poor access to political information especially in the rural areas.

Participants indicated on the open-ended responses to question 39 that, historically, women performed different roles such as farming and trading, including household activities. The economic activities they additionally perform apparently determined women's position in life including their participation in national politics. It was concluded that these activities were a source of constraints to women's participation in national politics premised on the belief that women and men are different. Men have fewer domestic activities to perform than women; hence men have sufficient time to always dominate in national politics.

The second dimension was on women who were interested in national politics; it was revealed from the questionnaire that during party politics some women are good campaign manageress to male politicians especially to women's groups in the District. Apart from women in the District belonging to political parties, some are card bearing members of their respective parties and have the political potentials in them which suggest that they have the interest in national politics. They usually move around to canvass for supporters in order to win more votes. The interest some of these women portray is an indication that some women possess political potentials which need to be developed to enable women to have their fair representation and participation in national politics in the District. It was also evident from question 34 that male politicians' wives do campaign well for their husbands. At the interviews and focus groups discussions participants cited instances of the recent elections where Hon. Ambrose Dery and Hon. Dr. Benjamin Kunbour wives did campaigned seriously for their husbands. Also it was observed that more women attend political rallies than men during party politics, majority of the men in the District supported this view. This observation reflected in the question 36, and the interviews as well as in the focus group discussions in response to the question that demanded reasons why respondents think that women's have interest in national politics. An indication that women always dominate in political rallies but out of fear and their subordinate position in the community only just a



few accept executive positions in the party and that invariably affects women's numerical strength in national politics.

It was equally indicated on question 32 that a few women are currently elected assembly women and have retained their seats in their electoral areas. If a woman is elected and then re-elected to office, it may help convince the electorate, including men, that other women can do the same.

Still on questions 32 and 33, women's political potentials were realised by the leadership roles they perform. According to the findings, many women are women's group leaders, women's party organizers, and they are good Heads or good acting Heads of households in some communities in the District. This was equally confirmed by statistics that women in the District constitute about 53.4% and a majority are heads of households (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000).

4.6 Perceptions towards Women in National Politics

One of the key areas that were to be really identified was the perceptions of both males and females towards women who are into national politics. The responses from the questionnaire revealed both positive and negative perceptions based on the statements expressed by respondents; the tables on the two pages are based on questions 6 to 30 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A), and present the positive and negative perceptions of men as well as women towards women in national politics in the Lawra District. Each of the responses given on the tables was mentioned once or more, but no response occurred more than three times.



Table 4.6 Men's Perceptions towards Women in National Politics

| Positive perceptions | Negative perceptions |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-partners in development • Better attempt to change the status quo • Freedom fighters for women's liberation • Women who want to own resources • Women who want to be well-informed • Have a wide range of interest • More and better accountable to the electorate • Very sympathetic and empathetic to electorate • Challenge to male counterparts • Deserve respect among women • Women are equally capable as men • Can do better than men • Promoting gender equality • Source of inspiration to other women • Political pacesetters • Promote women's economic and/political empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be given subordinate position • Bad women who want to challenge the abilities of men. • Traditionally odd and unacceptable • Attempt to dominate the superiority of men • Out of control and claiming to be too knowledgeable • Deviation from womanhood • Troublemakers • Enemies to fellow women • Waste of women's votes • Inferior to male counterparts • Misplaced feminist roles • Suffer sexual harassment • Cannot easily get a husband • Incapable of competing well with men • Risking their lives in men's field • A threat to womanhood • Commits adultery • Frustrated women |

Source: Field Survey, Feb.2010



Table 4.7 Women's Perceptions towards Women in National Politics

| Positive | Negative |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women can mobilise resources better than men for development • Women will have zero tolerance to political violence • Minimise political corruption • Minimise embezzlement of public funds in the public sector • Zero tolerance to violence against women • Women can promote political women's movement • Provide financial support to family members • Sense of love for her community • Good political thinkers • Voice of the voiceless • Normal and a step in the right direction • Can be better politicians than men • Can break the inhuman treatment to women • Promoters of girl – child education • Brave and fearless • Can fight male extremism in politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have no future if political party fails • Women with bad character • Under-dogs in national politics • Disgrace to their husbands • Would not be equal to the political task • Women who are daring • Being too ambitious • Have broken homes if married • Have broken marriages • Children will be wayward • Tyrant and too known • Women who neglect house chores • Women who don't value their marriages • Domineering and lording over men/women |

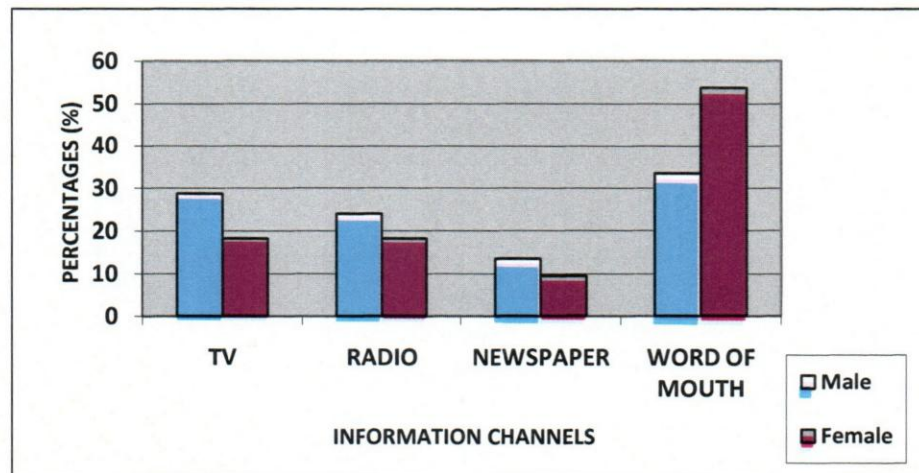
Source: Field Survey, Feb.2010

These perceptions invariably have an effect on the participation level of women in national politics in the District and women's access to the mass media.



4.7 Women's Access to Information Channels

With regard to identifying the primary ways of learning about national politics in the District, as on question 35 it was realised from the questionnaire that the accessibility to political information channels was one of the constraints to women's participation in national politics. The responses indicate that political information channels are limited; of the few that were available, many women have only limited access to them to obtain information on national politics. As a result, a majority of the women are not well – informed on issues of national politics. The bar chart below indicates the percentages of how men and women in the District access political information.



Source: Field Survey, 2010

Figure 1.5: Access to Information by Males and Females

Comparatively, from the questionnaire, respondents indicated that men access political information more in the District than women though they are all in the same area and are not restricted to access information. Many women insufficiently access the use of the mass media in their endeavour for political information in the District. It could be estimated from the questionnaire and interviews that one out of every five women can access political information either adequately or not. This can be attributed to the financial insolvent of women to secure items and documents that could assist them to access political information, e.g. radio sets, televisions, newspapers, journals and other internet services.

4.8 Motivational Factors for Female's Participation in National Politics

It was discovered on question 40 that certain factors if given the most desirable attention can motivate women in the Lawra District to participate in national politics. In open-ended responses, these factors included financing women's political candidates, adequate political education and the elimination of cultural practices that affect women's political participation.

From the interviews and focus group discussions, it was reported that political bribery and corruption were seen to be one of the disturbing factors that discouraged women in the District to participate in national politics. According to the discussions male politicians who contest for various positions use all means available whether by hook or crook to win their votes, and women found it not only difficult but embarrassing to follow that pattern. All the group members referred to the 2008 Parliamentary elections between the NDC and NPP parties as evidence in the District where some individuals were given monies to canvass for their candidate's popularity as reported. It was therefore suggested that if political bribery and corruption are eliminated it would serve as a motivational factor to potential women politicians in the District.

It was very clear on question 35 that a majority of both men and women do not vote for women candidates during party and national elections in the District. Accordingly, that discourages women who intend to participate in national politics because they have the feeling that if they express their interest men would not support them. It was therefore suggested that at the political parties' level men should endeavour to vote for women to hold party executive positions rather than always relying and voting for only male counterparts. This reflected at the focus group discussion level, as three of the six group members suggested that at the party level, political parties' executive positions should be gender sensitive to provide fair quota of 50% executive positions to women to enable men to see women as political partners in the development process and should be equally given prominent attention as such in the District.

This was very interesting to me because most focus group participants, whether male or female, equally raised the concern that a majority of women failed to showcase their political interest in national politics as men do but want positions. Indeed, majority of the men remarked that it was unconstitutional to political parties because



the parties' constitutions require that candidates vying for party and national positions in national politics should contest and be elected by popular majority. This is an indication that a majority of women in Lawra District do not showcase their political potentials. Hence, as noted earlier, Mama (1999:63) posits, 'where are women in African political culture?' In view of that, not until women in the District change from their fear and confront national politics with full ambition with full participation, they will always remain marginalised and less represented in the Lawra District.

As a referral point from the questionnaire, the 2008 Parliamentary election in the District was a case study for reference to many respondents to indicate that political violence of late is very common in the Ghanaians' politics and accordingly Lawra District is not an exception during party politics. The violence that is associated with politics sets a lot of fear to women who are interested in national politics. Women are mostly affected because by their cultural upbringing they are trained not to be violent to men especially in traditional politics where women have no say in the District. This transcends to national politics as an inevitable element because women are only to listen and obey men's decisions. The absence of political violence would be a sufficient ground to motivate women who are interested in national politics to participate fairly.

It was also suggested on question 40 that while political empowerment of women should be intensified to create women's political interest in national politics there is equally the need to review upwards the District quota of women's seats in the District Assembly to enable more women participate in national politics. Indeed the gender profile in the District Assembly is not laudable because Kunbour (2009) indicated that only about 12.8% of women are in the Lawra District Assembly as Government Appointees. This is a low representation of women because statistics from the 2000 and Housing Population Census indicated that the District is dominated by 53.4% of women as stated earlier, an indication that women should rather dominate in the Assembly, all things being equal.

Quite a number of suggestions on question 40 were on financial motivation, that political parties should sponsor women politicians especially during political rallies and campaigns at national elections. The issue was that many women are financially



incapacitated as a result of political illiteracy and poor resource ownership as indicated in the conceptual framework. Hence, Tsikata (2000) observed that the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's economic and political status are essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government.

One of the general observations on question 40 of the questionnaire was that both men and women in the District need to be sensitised on women's political rights to participate in national politics. The concerns were that adequate productive education is highly needed to liberate women's marginalisation in national politics in the District considering the representation of women in the District Assembly. One of the key suggestions on question 40 was that women's participation in national politics could be considered an integral part in the school syllabus in order to create awareness of women's political rights at the formative age of the Ghanaian girl-child. This would invariably enhance women's participation in national politics at all levels. The issue of girl-child education should be intensified and given prominence in the educational agenda that would help reduce the high illiteracy rate of women and to boost women's participation in national politics in the Lawra District. This is because statistics revealed that women's illiteracy is high by 73.6% in the Lawra District (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000).

Indeed it was again suggested from the responses in the questionnaire among other things that a cultural revolution that would place women high on the pedestal would bring sufficient liberation of women to participate in national politics. The concerns included the breaking of all traditional barriers that are obstacles to women's participation in national politics such as male-chauvinism, early marriages, male-headship and many others that have the tendency to limit women's participation in national politics in the District.

4.9 National Politics and Women's Participation, the Opinions of People in Positions of Authority

I conducted a number of interviews in the field with people in positions of authority that have sufficient knowledge on issues of national politics in the Lawra District. The following were the findings from some participants.



An interview with the National Patriotic Party Women Organizer, who is a business woman, indicates that the party has a large number of followers in the Lawra District, out of which about 65% are women supporters. However, in spite of that, the seat women occupy at the executive position at the constituency level is very low. According to the interviewee, in the constituency executives, women represent 14% and that is on the position of Constituency Women Organizer and Assistant Women Organizer position. Women usually did not contest for any other position except these two positions. This was indicated by the Party Women Organiser.

In response to the efforts made so far to encourage women in the District to participate in national politics, she mentioned the efforts of the Council for Women and Development and ProNet who have organised such training sessions for selected women in the District during the political electioneering campaigns in 2008, a means of empowering women politically. According to the women's organizer she obtained her political information from the media particularly through the television and the radio stations aside from other special information sent down to her from party executives at the top level. She added that a large number of women who are party followers in the various political parties lack not only political information but cannot access the appropriate political information at the right time. Many women also feel that they are politically incapable and cannot challenge the domineering men in national politics always refuse to showcase their political potentials. Coupled with the job protection, marriage and poor support from husbands put women at the periphery of national politics. Indeed, to me the fear women harbour would not certainly be the best solution to their non participation in national politics, they should rather be pragmatic enough as other women in the world to challenge men in the political arena after all women who are into national politics are performing remarkably, for instance the Speaker of Parliament in Ghana's Parliament.

However, the interviewee, a business woman, had a good perception of women in national politics by her statements that 'women politicians equally contribute their quota even more successfully than quite a number of male politicians.'

Interacting with the Constituency Women's Organizer of the NDC party indicates a similar view. She lamented that women represent only 40% at the Constituency Executive level in the party executive position. She confirms the lack of interest in



many women; even though some have the interest, they are at the periphery of the party. According to her, some women demonstrate their interest in national politics by attending party meetings, rallies and campaigning for male politicians although they do not and have never contested any position in national politics such as Member of Parliament or District Chief Executive. She added that one can also observe women's interest in national politics by the few Assemblywomen who have retained their seats in the District Assembly. She had a positive perception of women in national politics and said they perform better if they are well empowered in national politics. The mass media remain the only source of obtaining their political information especially television and radio. She attributed the low or poor participation of women in national politics to fear, inferiority complex, illiteracy, poor resources ownership, loss of one's dignity as a responsible woman, poverty, poor support from men, and unemployment, among other issues. She concluded that in spite of all these odds she will always advise and encourage women to participate in national politics.

A mirror reflection of the low participation of women in national politics was equally seen in the Convention People's Party (CPP), one of the political parties in the District. The Constituency Chairman and also the 2nd Vice Regional Chairman, indicates that they have thirteen (13) member executives at the constituency level and only two are women representing 15% of women in the executives for women organizer's positions. He equally commented on fear, illiteracy, poverty, poor political education and lack of support from political parties, fellow women and men as some of the obstacles that persist in the District retarding the progress of women in national politics. The final suggestion was that the press, political parties, Members of Parliament, District Chief Executives and non-governmental organizations need more attention on women's political empowerment in the District.

The problem of women's low participation in national politics continues to manifest itself in other political parties. The Constituency Secretary of the Democratic People's Party (DPP), another member revealed similar sentiments at the constituency level. The differences were that in their party women constitute 60% of the constituency party executives performing the same roles as party women organizers. He observed that the violent nature of politics in the District coupled



with the chieftaincy disputes puts a lot of fear in women because chieftaincy issues are more traditional and women are not and cannot be qualified to handle the chieftaincy issues. Men by their domineering nature during political campaigns intimidate women unnecessarily and use derogatory words on them to put more fear in them, hence the low participation of women in national politics.

In Lawra District there is the Office of the Member of Parliament. On 23rd March 2010, the Secretary to the Office of the Member of Parliament was interviewed by me on the subject, "Women's Participation in National Politics in the District." His responses revealed his view that women in the District feel shy and have a lot of fear in them. According to him the fear they may not be given the nod as MP or DCE and the fear of losing the election or their party not winning the election is high in them. As a result of that, women do not contest party primaries let alone vying for positions such as MP or DCE in national politics. This is seen by him as evidence that women lack the confidence to contest with men in national politics in the District. Adams further indicated that no effort was made so far to salvage women from their slumber in national politics. He explained his view that a majority of the women in the District are not politically mature to challenge men to occupy positions in national politics; hence men are always seen to be domineering in national politics in the District. He estimated that less than 5% of women in the District can be said to be interested in national political positions and even with that they are back benchers, always not ready to lead. He attributed this attitude to lack of interest and fear; in his view women usually have the perception that men would outwit them coupled with women's financial constraints and poor or little political empowerment to women's groups to help alleviate the political fear in women.

The Secretary to the Office of the Member of Parliament concluded that there should be an upward adjustment of government appointees strictly for women in the District assembly elections. Also, the various political parties should make it a constitutional mandate in some of the communities to present women as their candidate for national elections as a means of encouraging women's fair participation in national politics in Lawra District.

People with Traditional Authority as power in the District are the various Chiefs in the community. According to a chief interviewed for this study, no woman has ever



stood for election in the District, and women seem not to be interested in national politics, and they feel it is the preserve for men. And that no efforts are being made so far to encourage women to participate in national politics except the individual male politicians who contest for positions in the District. According to the opinion of a Chief, people in the District obtain their political information from the mass media specifically radio and television which limits a lot of women when it is in English only and by word of mouth mostly at social gatherings such as at the markets, drinking spots, funerals, churches, mosques, etc.

It was revealed from the interview that the cultural upbringing of women do not favour them to prepare them adequately for national politics. Culturally, women are to support men to any level but not women. The interviewee emphasized that national politics is not suitable for women especially married women. Those women who go into national politics have inadequate time for the family because national politics takes a lot of time. In view of that, the Chief concluded that 'I would not allow my wife to go into national politics she will be compelling me to take a second wife for my attention'.

However, he outlined the constraints of women in national politics as being cultural, economic, fear of disappointment, sexual harassment, threat and illiteracy among others. Finally, he suggested that the government and other political veterans or senior politicians should make it a deliberate policy to entice women into national politics. But the major thing is women should have the interest and be prepared to face the challenge of the men.

The District has a District Gender Desk Officer, in charge of gender affairs. An interview with her indicated she has voted for a woman before, an Assemblywoman by the name of Madam Louisa Dayang in the Kogle Electoral Area in 2007. According to her, she voted for Ms Dayang because she is an eligible Ghanaian woman who possesses the requisite qualification, capabilities and qualities that can help change the pattern of male – domination in the area over the years. The fact that she is the District's Gender Desk Officer adds further credibility to the view that male domination in national politics in the District is entrenched. The Officer who hails from Kogle said few efforts were scarcely made to motivate women to participate in national politics. Mention was made on the efforts of some few



organisations such as Action Aid Ghana, Adinal – Korad Foundation and the National Commission for Civic Education in the District. She said once this is not regular, women in the District were bound to lack a lot of political information and that certainly would affect their political interest. She identified other factors that limit women's participation in national politics as marriage, child birth, too much domestic activities, financial bankruptcy, and poor support from men including some women who simply envy the few women who venture into national politics. She concluded that both men and women highly need political empowerment especially the men to enable them to see the need to allow and support women to participate in national politics. "I will forever encourage women to forge ahead in spite of the entire odds women encounter in the district," and that the adage that women's place is in the kitchen should be a thing of the past in this 21st Century, she added.

One of the opinion leaders in the District, Mr. Francis Tengzag, a full time building contractor, is the Nandom Bu Assemblyman who has retained his seat two consecutive times. According to him, no woman has ever emerged to contest any political post in the Bu electoral area. When the reason was requested, he said the media is not sufficient enough to provide political education to the people; what is more effective in the dissemination of political information is based on a man to man or woman to woman basis; that is, by word of mouth. According to Mr. Tengzag, very few women as a result of illiteracy can access other sources of political information such as newspapers, radio announcement in English language and the internet services. In response to a question about whether women in the district have interest in national politics, he responded in the affirmative but with the observation that fear, ignorance, domestic chores and the violent nature of politics that is dominated by men scare women in various ways making them shelve their political ambition which many of them could have pursued without difficulty. He concluded that women who really want to pursue their national political agenda should be prepared to face threats from men, be criticized openly, live a morally up – right life, lose her husband, stay with a second woman in a polygamous life, put her home in order because national politics can take her far away, be prepared for life and death because national politics is very risky, have wayward children, frustrated husband and drunkard husband, there is no politics without expenditure.



The responses from the above interviewee are an indication that women are not only being motivated in the District, but are subject to threats such as above, positioning women in an obscure angle to deny women the opportunity to develop their political potentials that would enhance their political participation and representation in national politics. Hence, male-domination in party structures results in an imbalance in political participation. According to him, if women are prepared to face all these challenges they can participate meaningfully in national politics without hesitations.

The Parish Priest in charge of the affairs of the Parish in Ko concluded that, women either lack the interest to go into national politics or have a high level of inferiority complex in them and that is why they do not surface to participate in national politics. That the Church advocated that many women should endeavour to go into national politics, but this is not heeded to as expected. Many women see national politics to be the preserve for men, and women are only to support the men. A good number of women go high in the academic ladder but prefer to save their marriages than to toy with it. According to him, this is attributed to the fact that society considered women as 'children' who are not involved in taking major decisions because it is believed traditionally that women cannot keep confidential secrets. Once they even marry they culturally belong to their family of orientation. However, he is of the opinion that quite a number of women can be very good in national politics and he would advise that women should be selfless, keep their Christian identity and be well-equipped and participate in national politics. He added that women in the district need to be informed politically and that would go a long way to bury the fear in them.

It is evident from the interviews that the participation and representation level of women in the political parties' executive positions in the District is seen to be low and that transcends into the District Assembly with low participation resulting into the low participation of women in national politics.

4.10 National Politics and Women's Participation: the Opinion of Some Female Participants in the Focus Group Discussion

This group was composed of six female members who were of different ages and of different professions. During the discussions, the group was of the opinion that women can do as well as men if they get the opportunity to go into national politics



and even better because women in general are strict and do not want humiliation, they would avoid embezzlement, corruption and pilfering of government properties for personal gains but meet the needs of the electoral area. As a means of encouraging other women to go into national politics, the consensus of the group was that their male counterparts should see women as partners in development but not enemies that want to challenge them. National politics should be violence free to eliminate the high level of fear in women, men should not be using derogatory terms on women who show interest in national politics and, above all, political parties should make it mandatory to sponsor female politicians because women in general lack resources in the district. The group had a good perception of women who are into national politics; according to them, such women serve as role models to fellow women, campaign for women who want to join them in politics and generally contribute to the political empowerment process of women in Ghana which to them needs serious attention, particularly in Lawra District. They added that the only ways by which they obtain their political information is by word of mouth through politicians, party agents, party rallies and personal contacts (woman to woman or man to woman). Further conclusions from the group as to how women perceived women in national politics were as follows: women feel shy to face the crowd to talk, women in national politics would have no respect to men and fellow women because of political power, women are very strict with their instructions, too known and want to be always consulted, women talk like men debunking cultural values, women are mostly self – centred and can be flirts and have no good husbands.

4.11 National Politics and Women's Participation: the Opinion of Some Male Participants

The second focus group was made up of six males only with varied professions and ages in the District. Members were of the opinion that women can never be equal to men who are culturally born to be leaders. According to the group, culturally in the area women are considered being people who always fear to be blamed. It was further revealed that, according to the consensus of the group, it is not very appropriate to encourage women to get into national politics, because women are good home manageress, trainers of children, men's property and if we encourage them to go into national politics that would play down that significant role women perform in the house and in the community at large. As noted earlier, Bari (2005) also stated that the gender roles have relegated women to mere housewives and



mothers who are ready to execute men's ideas in the home and allow men in the public sphere for politics. This contradicts with the view of Abagré (2004) who acknowledged the significant role that a few northern women Parliamentarians such as Catherine Tedam and Lydia Akanbodiipo played in Parliament that testified to their determination to overcome all barriers of gender inequality. Madam Akanbodiipo through the National Alliance Party was appointed a Chief Whip in the opposition side in 1969. It is equally evident that the current women in the 2008 Parliament are performing their roles creditably to the admiration of their respective constituencies hence there are no complaints in the media about them.

According to the views of focus group members, the causes of low participation of women in national politics included: fear, illiteracy, unwillingness to learn from men, women always prefer to be subordinates to men, very obedient and interested to take instructions from men and ever ready to work for men to the detriment of their own interest as well as lack of political interest.

As to the question of whether women are interested in national politics in the district, a majority of the group members responded in the negative. According to them, apart from attending political rallies there is no interest shown anywhere again in national politics. Where there is money and work, women register their participation but not for any political information to contest for political position in national politics.

The data collected indicated that a majority of men who were present in the group do not have a positive perception of women in national politics and as a result they see women as people who will not only certainly lose in the future, but who are incompetent and cannot advance in national politics. It was obvious that about 2 members of the group have positive perceptions of women going into national politics.

With regards to how they obtain their political information in the district, they mention man to man as a very effective information channel and through other social gatherings and the radio FM stations in the region. According to the group, it will be very bad on their part as males to vote for a woman candidate because women by their upbringing traditionally are not groomed for national politics.



Furthermore, other socio – cultural factors such as marriage, childcare, domestic chores, their own inferiority complex, gender roles and the subordinate position of women in the community limit their representation and participation in national politics.

4.12 National Politics and Women's Participation: Views from Men and Women from Focus Group Discussions (Mixed).

Below I present results from the two mixed focus groups. The first was a mixed group that was made up of six members of varied professions and different in age and sex, three women and three men.

The opinion of this group on the subject matter got divided into two with a mixed sex (2 females, 1 male taking one side, and 2 males and 1 female taking the other side) which will be called A and B for purpose of this discussion. Each side took an entrenched position. While group A agreed that women could do even better when in national politics, could better be politically informed, could talk to convince and win support, and that many women have the requisite qualification, that of the second group disagreed with the indication that culturally women are subordinate to men and should obey the dictates of men for peaceful co-existence in the community as a requirement, especially married women.

In fact, on the question on how men could encourage women to go into national politics, the group got divided with two schools of thoughts as indicated earlier. The first school of thought (A) observed that some wives are very dear to their hearts and they would not like to miss them by supporting them into national politics. This group agreed that national politics means driving your wife away, man alone does not make a home, gender roles culturally must be strictly observed and males must not perform that of females, sexual starvation is not good for men, it would be very difficult for man to manage the numerous domestic chores, behind a successful man there is a great woman, women have 100% love for money and can easily be swayed away by unscrupulous men, the man would have very little respect in the community, the man would be exposed to contract STDs from other women, the man would have very little or poor feeding and can easily become alcoholic to death.



The second school of thought (B) was quite positive to encourage women to go into national politics. According to them it is time for the total political liberation of women in the District. They questioned, “What prevents men from going into the kitchen?” The thinking that a woman’s place is in the kitchen cannot be applied in this 21st Century where modernity and technology are at their peak. Therefore they are ready to allow women to go into national politics, support them financially, campaign for them, encourage women not to be afraid or harbour any political fear, vote for women candidates, provide them with accurate and adequate political information, defend women who are politically harassed and provide them all the moral support that they need to be successful.

This school of thought believed that political decision making should not be one – sided and women must be involved. Hence they see political discrimination to be the thing of the past in this Century.

It is quite indicative that the perceptions of the group (Group B) have been clearly spelt out by these schools of thought and the negative aspects limit women’s participation in national politics, hence the low interest of women in national politics. Finally they suggested that the cultural up – bringing of the children should be modified to grant men and women equal opportunity in all aspects of life in the community and that may limit the discrimination of women in national politics.

In group four, members were six comprising 3 men and 3 women with varied background in profession and experience. Their response to the first question was that women just like men equally have the brains to participate in national politics. It was observed that the few women who are into national politics are up and doing, women are now ready in this 21st century to participate in national politics just as seen in chapter one (Table 1) and men should not continue to discriminate against them in national politics. For instance, Ama Benyiwa – Doe, Alice Boom, Christina Churcher, Hana Tettey, Shirley Ayorkor Botwe, Gladys Asmah, and Betty Mould Iddrisu are women who had gained national recognition through national politics in Ghana. Therefore, the conclusion was that women in Lawra District can equally perform just like these women.

What women need from men as a source of encouragement is political support by permitting them to go into politics, help campaign for them, sensitise men’s groups



to vote for female candidates, take care of the domestic chores and children, serve as political counsellors to women candidates and pay no attention to remarks from the general public about their wife who is into national politics. These will go a long way to encourage women in the District to be interested in national politics. Indeed both men and women in the group have very positive perceptions of women in national politics as indicated earlier. As indicated by a member of the focus group, 'We all need to eliminate all other cultural factors that limit the participation of women in national politics and very importantly support women to showcase their interest in a fearless manner in politics'.

However, according to the group, the main problem in the District is the high illiteracy rate of women. Many women are illiterates and that breeds ignorance and fear in the political arena of women. The few women who are also literates have limitations as a result of marriage and security of jobs. Marriage traditionally sets a lot of limits to women in the District because when a successful marriage rite and rituals are performed the woman is pronounced and claimed to be the property of the husband's family forever except in the event of a successful divorce.

The following were some of the suggestions put across by the group four members to justify their opinion on the position of women's participation in national politics: compulsorily, 40% of women must file for political positions in national politics in Ghana, and that would extend and allot a percentage to Lawra District women, Government should make it a constitutional mandate to sponsor women candidates throughout the Districts, Girl – child education should be intensified in each District, at the school level, more girls should be given leadership responsibilities as the beginning of political training, District Assemblies should intensify the formation of women political groups to enhance women political education and women's Political Education and Training should form an integral part of the Ghanaian school curriculum throughout the educational system.

Based on qualitative findings, the barriers that limit women's political participation in national politics in the Lawra District are reported to include marriage, illiteracy, domestic work, poverty, poor political information channels, female subordination, fear and lack of motivation and support to women especially those who have the political potentials to shine.



KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section elaborates on the key findings from the study. It then revisits the conceptual framework posited in Chapter 1 before proceeding to a conclusion of the topic under study. The chapter then closes with recommendations to enhance women's participation in national politics and suggestions for further study on the topic.

5.2 Key Findings

The findings on the study on the low participation of women in national politics in the Lawra District established that since the introduction of the District Assembly concept, no woman ever contested as a candidate and won the seat of the Member of Parliament (MP) and the District Chief Executive (DCE), though women have demonstrated their interest in national politics by belonging to political parties and exercising their franchise during party politics and elections in the District. The interest of women was further established by their enthusiasm to campaign for male candidates as political party card bearers. It was therefore sufficient to conclude that males dominate in national politics in the study area because females do not contest seriously with males for the available political positions.

It was also evident from the revelations that the traditional marriage system that is practiced in the District is a hindrance to women's participation in national politics, because women do not only serve as subordinate members in the family, but their going into national politics depends largely on the interest and recommendation as well as the support of men. This applies especially to married women who are subjected to obey the decisions of their husbands as one of the key cultural element to sustain their marriages in the District.

As indicated earlier, women's low participation in national politics was, according to women, affected by their own fear and inferiority complex, which may result in a poor concept of the self when it comes to national politics. The general perceptions of respondents further indicated that the domination of men in national politics set



fear in women coupled with their inferiority complex as a result of the subordination role women play in family issues.

It was established that literacy plays a key role in national politics, because one's level of literacy determines the political role and position in national politics. However, women's level of literacy in the District was observed to be poor hence it affects their participation in national politics.

Also, one of the key areas was the factor of financial constraints and poor ownership of resources that limit women's interest and political participation. The District is among the identified poverty areas in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000) and here poverty is entrenched among women, especially women who are not in public employment. As noted earlier, women constitute the majority in the District. It is evident that many of the poor people would be women and that certainly resulted in women's poor participation in national politics in the District.

The National Democratic Party (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) dominate all the other political parties in the District by followers. Many of the women and women's groups are followers of these two parties as supporters than the other parties such as Convention People's Party (CPP), Democratic Front Party (DFP), and others.

In the dissemination of political information a majority of women in the study area lack adequate political information, except during an election year. It was revealed that the only main source of women to access political information was from mouth to mouth than any other sources such as newspapers, television, internet, journals and others. About 85% of women who were interviewed confirmed that political information spread faster through oral means in the District.

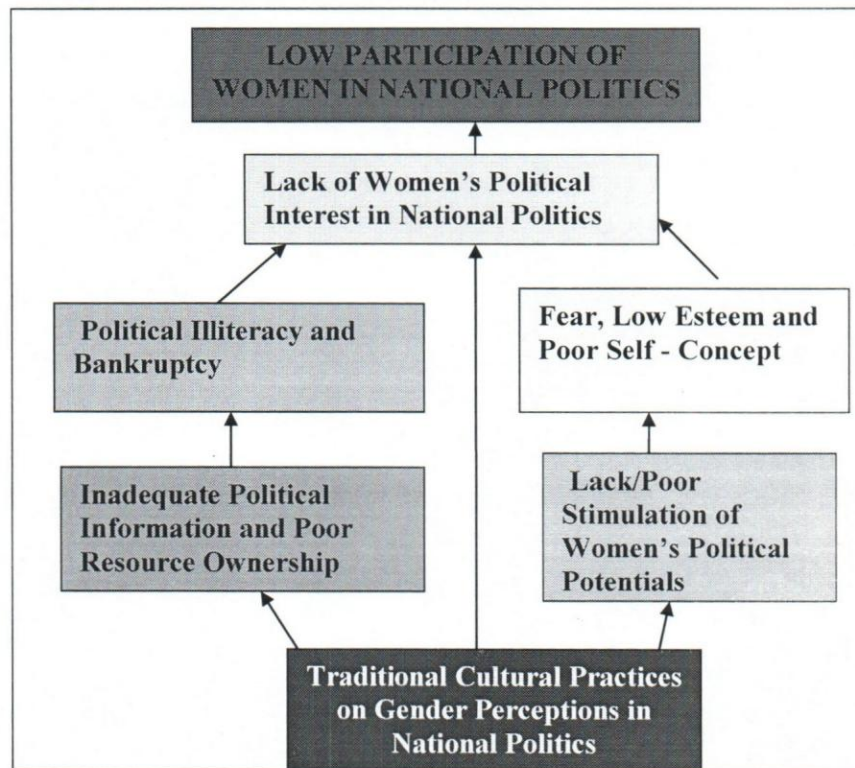
It was also confirmed that there is a level of political violence in national politics in the District and that contributes significantly to the low participation of women in national politics. Most of the political party followers, especially men, are mostly intolerant with derogatory comments to opponents, which create fear in women who would have been interested to contest for positions in national politics.



Women in the Lawra District face persistent gender inequalities, deprivations and social injustices that limit their full participation in national politics. Women are disadvantaged relative to men in terms of access and control over resources and services, education and training and participation in decision-making. This phenomenon has contributed significantly to the low pace of women's participation in national politics in the District, hence the manifestation of certain negative characteristics of fear when it comes to representation and participation of women in the political arena.

5.3 A Reflection on the Conceptual Framework

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Author's construct

The conceptual framework model helped or promoted conceptual understanding on the findings on women's interest and participation in national politics in Lawra District, the basis for the study. It was observed that at the end of the findings each of the factors indicated on the framework has a level of reflection on the participation level of women's in national politics either directly or indirectly in the Lawra District. This was evident in the opinions of people in positions of authority and the general public through the interviews, questionnaires and the focus group



discussions conducted. Considering the findings, women's low representation as well as participation in national politics is based on various cultural practices in their community that affect their lives. Indeed, gender and culture cannot be disentangled since every aspect is basically cultural in nature. The practices such as marriage, childcare, domestic chores, resource ownership and political education have a reflection and can be traced back to the conceptual framework model as traditional cultural practices and gender perceptions that negatively affect the perceptions of men and women on women's participation in national politics.

The conceptual framework model was useful to the study because it did not only help to identify the sequential inter-relationships of the rudimentary causes of the problem in the District but equally facilitated the study as it motivated me to investigate into the low participation of women's in national politics. Also, the theory of cause and effect in research was better explored through the framework which assisted the study to pinpoint or detect how a change in perception of males and females influenced the outcome of this study in the analysis.

5.4 Conclusion

Culturally, there has been gender discrimination in national politics in the District so much so that women are seen by men as subordinates' partners in national politics. Sex discrimination has been, among other factors, a major threat to women's participation in national politics. Indeed, the participation of women in national politics is not only indispensable but a constitutional right to women in this democratic era of political dispensation. The people in the District should make all efforts to accept and encourage women to go into national politics.

5.5 Recommendations

Among other issues, there is a need for a reconsideration of the level of participation of women in national politics that would place women high on the pedestal to bring sufficient gender equity of women's participation in national politics in the District. This would include the breaking of all cultural and traditional barriers that limit women's participation in national politics such as male-domination, early marriages, domestic chores and many other factors that account for the low participation of women in national politics. Clearly, it is not possible to change cultural practices overnight; however, it can be important for people in the District and indeed



throughout Ghana to look inward to reflect on the ways in which their own cultural practices might help or hinder women.

Male politicians who contest for various positions often use all means available whether by hook or crook to win their votes, and women found it not only difficult but embarrassing to follow that pattern. It is imperative that if political bribery and corruption are eliminated or abolished, it would serve as a motivational factor to potential women politicians in the District.

Political parties' executive positions should be gender sensitive to provide fair quota executive positions to women. Men should see women as political partners in the development process and should be equally treated as such in the District. Men should make concerted efforts to support women who show interest and come forward to contest for political positions both in the party and nationally in the District. The individual and collective efforts of men could be in line with the efforts of the Electoral Commission of Ghana which encourages women to vote and stand as candidates in their electoral areas with the reason being that apart from women knowing a lot of what their community needs, the active participation of women in politics in the Lawra District is very vital to increasing the number of women's political leaders in the District which is a key component of democracy. The better we (men) support women in politics in this 21st Century the better for the District development process.

Political violence of late is very common in Ghanaian politics and accordingly Lawra District is not an exception during party politics. The violence that is associated with politics puts a lot of fear in women who are interested in national politics. The absence of political violence or violence free elections would be a sufficient ground to motivate women who are interested in national politics to participate fairly as their men counterparts.

While intensifying political empowerment of women and men to create women's rights and political awareness in national politics there is equally the need to review upwards the District quota of women's seats in the District Assembly, electoral areas and in national politics at the national level. Both men and women in the District need to be sensitised to the rights of women to participate in national



politics. A very strong and productive public education is highly needed to liberate women from marginalisation in national politics in the District. The current 2010 Constitutional Review Committee can give it a priority.

The few women in national politics should demonstrate genuine commitment and concern for the development of women and the community. Equally motivating is women themselves to always support fellow women who possess the political potentials and qualifications to contest in national politics in the District.

As a matter of support, political parties should sponsor female politicians especially during political rallies and campaigns at national elections to alleviate the fear of financial insolvency among women. The political potentials of women can be developed through financial support to women's groups to undertake political activities in the District. Political parties should sponsor female education at the secondary and tertiary level so as to assist young girls to develop their political potentials.

Women's participation in national politics could be considered an integral part in the school syllabus in order to create awareness of women's political rights at the formative stage of the Ghanaian child. This would invariably enhance women's participation in national politics at all levels. The issue of girl – child education should be intensified and given prominence in the educational agenda that would help reduce the high illiteracy rate of women in order to boost women's participation in national politics. This will also facilitate women to have early contact with political information at the prime age.

Finally, further study could be conducted in the District by other researchers on similar topics such as women's involvement in domestic decision making, women's participation in power sharing, and party politics and women's development for further recommendations for the women's political improvement in the Lawra District.



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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student of the University for Development Studies, Wa Campus who is researching into the topic: **Women Participation in National Politics – Potentials and Challenges in the Lawra District**. The questionnaire is therefore designed to collect data for that purpose. The study is strictly for academic purpose and the report will not identify any individual responses. I wish to assure that any information provided for the purpose of the study will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. I appreciate in advance your considering participation in this study. Thank you.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please, for each of the items below tick -- or circle -- the boxes responding to your preferred response. For items without choice, write down your own response at the space provided.

SECTION A

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENT.

1. Name of traditional area in the District: a. Nandom [] b. Lawra []
2. Sex: a. Male [] b. Female []
3. Educational Level:
a. BECE [] b. SSS [] c. Diploma [] d. Graduate [] e. Masters+ []
f. none [] others (specify) -----

4. Employment status: a. Employee [] b. Self-employed [] c. Unemployed []
5. Religious affiliation: Christian [] Moslem [] Traditionalist [] None []

SECTION B

For this section, use the numerical scale below to indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement from question 6 to 30.

SCALE

Strongly Agree

1



Agree 2

Strongly Disagree.... 3

Disagree 4

No opinion5

6. Women prefer men to go into national politics -----
7. Women lack some specific training to go into national politics -----
8. Women are afraid in a predominantly male political environment -----
9. Men prevent women from going into national politics -----
10. Women lack informal contacts to go into national politics -----
11. Women are accepted to go into national politics -----
12. Men and women are treated equally into national politics -----
13. Women have to achieve more than men to enable them go into national politics -
14. When national political positions are few, men should have more right to occupy
15. The family suffers when women go into national politics -----
16. National politics is best for women who are not married -----
17. Women who are into national politics break their marriages -----
18. During elections men prefer to vote for male politicians -----
19. Men gladly accept their wives to go into national politics -----
20. Fear of political embarrassment limits women's effort to go into national politics
21. Women are not as politically informed as men about national politics -----
22. Traditional communities do not recognised women as politicians -----
23. Women are as financially supported as men in national politics -----
24. National politics is expensive; hence women do not like it -----
25. Many women do not like to vote for female candidates -----
26. Women in Lawra District are not very interested in national politics -----
27. Political information channels are inadequate in the district -----
28. A woman's place is in the home but not into national politics -----
29. Sexual harassment limit women into national politics -----
30. National politics is good for women who are from royal families -----
31. Which of the following is the primary way of learning about politics in your area? (Circle as many as possible)
a. television b. radio c. newspapers d. word of mouth e. others (specify) -----



SECTION C

Please in this section you are kindly require to provide further explanations to your responses as each question demands from 33 to 40.

32. Has a woman ever stood as an Assembly woman in your community?

a. yes b. no c. don't know

33. Would you accept a woman as a Member of Parliament in your constituency?

a. yes b. no c. don't know

Explain:-----

.....

34. Would you accept your wife to go into national politics? (If married).

a. yes b. no c. don't know

Explain: -----

35. Have you ever voted for a female candidate?

a. yes b. no

Why -----

36. In your view, do you think women in Lawra District are interested in national politics? (If yes, why and if no why not?)

37. In your view, how do men perceive women who are national politics?

38. In your view, how do women perceive women who are in national politics?



39. What practices in your community can limit women's participation in national politics?

Specify them. -----

40. Suggest some of the ways of improving women's participation in national politics in the district.

THANK YOU!



APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS

These interviews are intended to be conducted strictly for academic purpose, nothing beyond that. I assure you of a high level of confidentiality in your participation. Thank you.

Questions

1. Has a woman ever stood as a Parliamentary candidate or an Assemblywoman in your area? (If yes or no, why?)
2. Did you observe any efforts so far to encourage women in the district to participate in national politics? (If any, explain)
3. Where do you obtain your political information in the district?
4. Do you think women in the district are very much interested in national politics? (Why?).
5. As a man/woman how do you perceive women in national politics?
6. In your life as a voter, have you ever voted for a woman candidate? (When and why?).
7. Would you accept your wife to run for the office of a Member of Parliament or the District Chief Executive in the district? (Why?).
8. What difficulties/problems do women encounter when they go into national politics?
9. If I was a female candidate, and I came to you for advice about how to run for the office of MP, what advice would you give me?
10. Do you have something more to add that can improve this study?

THANK YOU!



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

These focus group discussions will strictly be confidential; opinions and contributions will not be identified by individual whatsoever on the topic: **Women's Participation in National Politics: Potentials and Challenges in Lawra District.** Thank you.

Questions

1. Do you think that women can do just as well as men if they get the opportunity to be elected into Parliament? (Explain)
2. How will you encourage women to go into national politics as a Member of Parliament (MP) or a District Chief Executive?
3. What brings about the low participation of women in national politics?
4. To what extent are women in the district interested in getting involved in national politics?
5. What do men perceived when they see women in national politics?
6. What do women perceived when they see their fellow women in national politics?
7. How do people in your community obtain political information?
8. How will you feel to vote for a woman who stands as a candidate?
9. Do you think there are socio-cultural factors that do not permit women to go into national politics in the district?
10. What suggestions can you provide to improve upon the participation level of women in national politics in the Lawra District?

THANK YOU

