

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE CENTRAL
REGION OF GHANA: CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS**



LUCY EFFEH ATTOM

2015

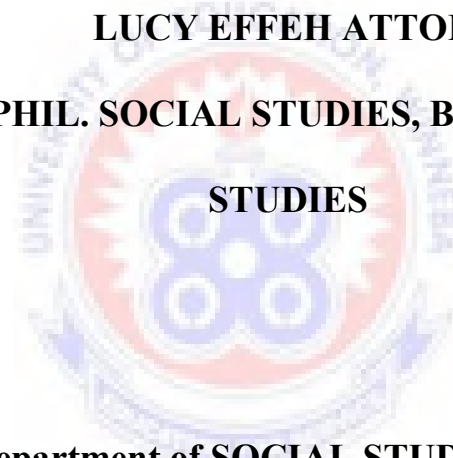
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REGION OF GHANA: CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS**

LUCY EFFEH ATTOM

M.PHIL. SOCIAL STUDIES, B.E(HONS.) SOCIAL

STUDIES



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requirement for the award of PhD IN SOCIAL STUDIES of the**

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

MAY, 2015

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, LUCY EFFEH ATTOM DECLARE THAT THIS THESIS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF QUOTATIONS AND REFERENCES CONTAINED IN PUBLISHED WORKS WHICH HAVE ALL BEEN IDENTIFIED AND ACKNOWLEDGED, IS ENTIRELY MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK, AND IT HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED, EITHER IN PART OR WHOLE FOR ANOTHER DEGREE ELSEWHERE.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....



SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the research was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of research work laid down by University of Education, Winneba.

Principal Supervisor's Name:

Principal Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....

Co- Supervisor's Name:

Co- Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....



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I will never forget my parents- the late Alex Y. Attom and the late Dinah Abaidoo who inspired and taught me not to relent but strive to do my best in my academic pursuit. Although both of you went to your maker during my Ph.D programme, I thank God for your lives on earth. I acknowledge all my siblings- Esther Essandoh, Alex Ekow Attom, Rose Attom, Margaret Attom, Ben Ebo Attom, Paulina Attom, Estella Attom and Stella Attom and all the women in political leadership in the Central Region of Ghana who willingly participated in this study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband – Mr. Ebenezer Appiah; and my children Eliza Esi Appiah Boateng and Daniel Kofi Appiah Boateng for your love and support.



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ABSTRACT

For some time now Ghanaian women have been encouraged and empowered to take active part in decision-making at all levels of society. It is, however, not plain-sailing for women in positions of leadership, especially in the realm of politics. A programme of qualitative research was therefore designed to explore the challenges that confront women in the performance of their responsibilities as political leaders as well as unearth ways of mitigating those challenges. Thirty participants, comprising ten assembly men, ten assembly women, seven women in various party executive positions, one former District Chief Executive, and two female Members of Parliament, were purposively sampled for the study. The theoretical focus of the study was on liberal feminist theory and Paulo Freire's theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed. It emerged from the study that paternalistic culture, dominated by men, imposes a set of double standards on female leaders, especially politicians. They are on one hand expected by some people to exhibit presumable male traits such as aggressiveness and assertiveness, while on the other hand demonstrating perceived feminine traits such as calmness, shyness, weakness etc. The different moral standards often set for women in leadership positions in politics restrict them from being who they are, while many traditional and religious beliefs and practices inhibit their performance as leaders. Moreover, financial constraints impede their efforts. An appreciation of social diversity and for that matter the potential of females in politics would as a first step enhance the recognition and acceptance accorded them. In order to achieve this political mentoring of young females, financial support, and reform of patriarchal structures are recommended.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

In the traditional set up, there is division of labour based on biological classification of the sexes and social construction of feminine and masculine roles. Parents see their daughters as weak, soft, fine-featured and dedicated while their sons are seen as strong, firm, large featured and well-coordinated (Calhoun, Light & Keller, 1994). These distinct qualities arguably form the basis of gender role socialization. By interpretation, girls in their various homes are socialized to engage in jobs in domestic activities such as preparation of food, taking care of children, tidying up the home and general house keeping while boys are expected to engage in jobs outside the home.

Moreover, males are expected to take active part in decision-making while females are expected to look up to men when it comes to decision making. This perception to a large extent, influences women's attitude and desire to aspire to positions in the political arena. According to Kwapong (2009), "women's poor representation in the political arena has emerged from societal and traditional beliefs, perception and prejudices..." (p. 117). There are some Ghanaian sayings in Akan that reinforce women's position in decision making. Examples of these are *Mbasiafo dze, ɔwɔ de yehu hɔn onnyi de yetse hɔn ndze* which literally means "women are to be seen and not to be heard", *Basia tɔ itur a ɔtwɛr banyin ne dan mu*, which literally means "if a woman buys a gun, it reclines in a man's room" and *Akokɔ ber nyim adzɛkyee naaso ɔhwɛ akokɔ nyin n'ano*

which also means “the hen knows daylight but waits for the cock to crow”. Such sayings can reflect the perception of women in political involvement and have perhaps influenced women’s attitude towards political leadership although, there is possible feminine activism in Ghana.

There is apparent male dominance in politics. The political institution seems to have been structured around men because of their age-old dominance and control over secular political leadership positions even though some women especially the old ones are seen as epitome of knowledge. Politics has been structured in such a way that it tends to favour those who possess certain qualities, resources and can compete. The personal qualities needed to excel in politics may include high level of education, being outspoken, assertiveness and confidence; qualities that men often possess. For example Agbalajobi (2010) argues that men possess the superior strength, competitiveness, are self-reliant and seem prepared to tussle in political endeavour, whereas women are considered too passive to engage in politics and governance.

The UNDP Report (1995) on women in decision making indicates a strong correlation across Africa, between women’s access to power and decision-making and their status. Women’s participation in leadership in general and politics in particular are influenced by various perceptions. Leadership, for example, is generally perceived as a male role, thus leading to under-representation of women in various political leadership positions in African countries such as Nigeria, Chad, DR Congo and Ghana. Nonetheless, there are a few countries that have seen increases in the number of women in Parliament over the years. According to Tripp (2001), female representation in Parliament by 2001 was 31 percent in Mozambique, up from 16 percent in 1991; 30 percent in South Africa,

up from 3 percent in 1991; and 25 percent in Namibia, up from 7 percent in 1994. Even these countries do not come close to proportionate representation of women who are more than half of the population in most countries. Representation of women in decision-making worldwide clearly indicates gender imbalance with men dominating the various national assemblies, cabinet and national executive of political parties (UNDP 1995; Tsikata, 2001).

Several efforts have been made by international institutions to include women in leadership especially in the political arena. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women as a Human Right Treaty in 1979. The Convention's 30 articles outline principles and measures for achieving equal opportunities for men and women in political, economic, social, legal and cultural affairs.

Similarly, the United Nations has also organized a number of conferences to promote active involvement of women in politics. The first of these conferences was held in Mexico City in 1975. The United Nations General Assembly followed up on its recommendations to endorse the *World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year*. Subsequently, the United Nations declared 1976 to 1985 as *United Nations Decade for Women* with the theme: Equality, Development and Peace. These three goals of equality, development and peace were aimed at motivating women, the other half of the world's population, to take active part in the political, economic, social, legal and cultural developmental process.

Other conferences sponsored by the United Nations to work for the full integration of women in the socio-economic and political development of states were the

1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria; the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo; and the 1995 World Social Summit for Development in Copenhagen. At the regional levels, the United Nations has sponsored conferences to review progress made and constraints encountered in attaining full integration of women in the development process.

To increase women's representation in leadership in the World, the United Nations organized the *Fourth World Conference on Women* in September 1995 in Beijing, China to put emphasis on Women's participation in decision-making. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was signed and all African countries, including Ghana, made commitments to women's advancement. One important aspect of these commitments was the need for women's empowerment, especially as evident in women's occupation of leadership positions (Longwe & Clark, 1999). The strategic objectives entreat government to take measures to ensure women's equal access to decision-making and increase their capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership

In Ghana the 1992 Constitution has clear provisions on equal rights and guarantees women's rights in the decision-making process with their male counterparts. Article 17 for example, provides for protection against discrimination and enjoins the state to employ measures to end all forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnicity, religion and creed. Article 27 clause 3 states, "women shall be guaranteed equal rights to training and promotion without any impediments from any person" (Republic of Ghana, 1992). These provisions in the Constitution ensure active participation of all people especially women in political leadership in the country.

In practice, equality cannot be achieved as the Constitution allows a dual system of laws, statutory and customary. According to Longwe and Clarke (1999), whereas statutory law may give considerable legal equality, customary law is extremely discriminating, often treating women as legal minors who are virtually owned by supervising males. Consequently, there are institutionalized forms of discrimination and impediments in the way of women in their effort to occupy political leadership positions. In addition, religious beliefs tend to reflect and justify gender inequality. Some religious groups such as the Islamic and Christian religions believe that women should be subordinate and submissive to men. Such beliefs can have influence on both sexes and have certainly affected women's participation in politics in Ghana.

In the First Republic of Ghana (1960-1966), President Nkrumah purposefully selected ten women (8.9%) as members of the one hundred and twelve parliamentarians. Apart from this (in the First Republic of Ghana), women were competing with men on equal terms in elections. The second Republican Government under Prime Minister Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, had two women (1.4%) as members of the one hundred and forty Parliamentarians. Ghana went back to constitutional rule briefly between 1979 and 1981. There were five (3.5%) women out of the one hundred and forty parliamentarians in the Third Republic.

When democratic governance was re-introduced in 1992, the first Parliament in 1992 had 16 women out of its 200 members. The second Parliament of the Fourth Republic had 18 (9%) women. In the third Parliament which began in 2000, there were 19 (9.5%) women out of the 200 members. In 2004 there were 230 Parliamentarians of which 25 (10.8%) were women. The number of women Parliamentarians decreased to 19

(8.3%) after the death of one woman parliamentarian in the Fifth Parliament of the Fourth Republic which began in 2009. The 2012 election saw 30 women entering Parliament. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2002) only about 10% of women were in leadership positions in Ghana. In 2004, out of the 110 District Chief Executives, only 12 (10.9%) were women while in 2007, they constituted 12% of the Council of State (MOWAC, 2007).

With the re-introduction of decentralization in Ghana in 1988, the consequent election of district assembly representatives has also not seen any improvement in women's participation in grassroots politics. For example, in the 1998 District Assembly elections, out of 4,820 elected candidates nationwide only 196 were women while 4,624 were men. The 2002 District Assembly election results indicated that 341 women were elected out of the 4,583 candidates (Electoral Commission, cited in Tsikata, 2009). In spite of the increase in the number of women elected to District Assemblies, from 3% in 1994 to 5% in 1998 and 7% in 2002, the participation of women continues to be low, considering the female population in Ghana. There are few women who contest in District Assembly Elections as compared to men. Consequently, there are few elected assembly women.

According to the Central Regional Coordinating Council, in the 2010 Assembly Elections there were 42 elected assembly women while 73 women were appointed to the assemblies by the government. The assembly men elected were 530, with another 174 appointed by the government. These figures indicate that comparatively, a large number of men were elected into the various district assemblies in the region as compared to

women. According to the United Nations assessment the threshold of at least 30% representation is needed for women's participation in decision-making to be meaningful.

To ensure active participation of women in Ghana's development, specific interventions have been adopted. These interventions include a micro credit scheme to help improve the economic status of women; family planning to enable women to plan their families and have time to participate in activities outside the home; training, capacity building, girl child education, legislation and affirmative action.

Besides, some political parties in the country, namely the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the People's National Convention (PNC) and the Convention People's Party (CPP) in their manifestoes indicate their commitment to gender issues in general and women's political participation in particular (Allah-Mensah, 2005). However, most of these political organizations do not reflect the tenets of their manifestos. There are many women in all these parties but there are few women occupying leadership positions. It is the CPP that has been able to have the first woman national chairperson; the rest have never had any woman as a national chairperson. The CPP and PNC have been able to comply with their claim of being gender sensitive to some extent by selecting women as running mates for the 2012 presidential elections even though they could not win the elections.

Major challenges stemming from structural inequalities can affect participation of women in political leadership generally in Ghana and in the Central Region in particular. The number of women in political leadership is few to the extent that their sheer number constitutes a challenge to the women leaders considering the democratic nature in which decisions are made at the various assemblies and in parliament. It is against this

background that this study explores challenges that women in political leadership in the Central Region encounter and how they deal with those challenges.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In recent times there have been public debates on the need to involve more women in leadership especially at the political level to enable them participate fully in policy formulation and implementation. Many arguments are being made by various personalities in Ghana. Some Ghanaians are of the view that female political leaders are not competent. Others believe that they are competent but there are many issues constituting stumbling blocks to some of them thus preventing them from excelling in political leadership positions. According to Eagly (2007), gaining leadership roles and performing effectively in them is challenging for women, especially in roles that have been dominated by men.

Female leaders seem to be confronted with a lot of challenges emanating from the existing political structures which have been established around men. It seems there is institutional form of discrimination. They face expectations that have been shaped by these prior male occupants of the roles (Eagly, 2007). They face a dilemma as to whether to conform to the existing political institutions or bring the necessary change in the political structures to make them gender friendly. Conforming to the political structure means they must exhibit double standards. This is because they are women and people expect them to behave as such but they are at the same time in positions that have been developed to conform to male ideals. This seems to pose a great challenge to these women.

Also, some of the members of the society and the family expect them to go by the gender role division of labour which stipulates that the roles of women are confined to the home. As Adu (1999) contends, domestic responsibilities, such as childcare, constitute major challenges to women in public office and leadership. Women who concentrate on their political career instead of issues at home are likely to encounter a great deal of conflict and stress as they may not be able to get adequate time to cater for the needs of their families. On the other hand, if they concentrate on issues at home at the expense of their political career, they may also encounter problems. Consequently, most women are afraid to enter into political leadership while some of the women in political leadership find it very difficult to continue to be in such positions.

This study, therefore, aims at providing empirical evidence of the challenges confronting women in leadership positions, such as assembly women, parliamentarians and political party executives since the Fourth Republic in 1993 in the Central Region.

1.2 The Scope of the Study

The study covered women in the Central Region of Ghana who have occupied political leadership positions since the Fourth Republic. In general, the focus is on women who are in secular political leadership positions outside the traditional leadership. The women occupy positions such as assembly women, political party executive at constituency level, district chief executive and parliamentarians. Some assembly men were involved to validate the data from the women.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide empirical evidence on the challenges confronting women in political leadership in the Central Region in order to help inform policy on the need to support women in political leadership in the bid to improve governance and democracy.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. find the factors that motivate women to aspire for political leadership.
- ii. examine how women in such positions perceive leadership;
- iii. assess the challenges confronting them, and finally
- iv. explore how these political leaders address the challenges confronting them.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors motivate women to aspire to political leadership?
2. How do such leaders perceive leadership?
3. What challenges confront them in both their aspirations and performance of their leadership roles?
4. How do they solve these challenges?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings would provide adequate empirical evidence on the exact challenges confronting women in political leadership and how they deal with such challenges. The beneficiaries of this research would be non-governmental organizations, corporate bodies, curriculum planners, women who aspire to be political leaders in Ghana, the general public, political parties and other researchers. The findings would serve as a reference document to non-governmental organizations and corporate bodies to enable them plan programmes that will help women in leadership positions to combat problems confronting them. Curriculum planners could also incorporate some of the findings into their courses so that women's potentials, credibility and competence could be enhanced. The research will also be useful to women who aspire to be political leaders in the Ghanaian society, to be well aware of the challenges that await them and be prepared to deal with such challenges appropriately if the need arises.

Political parties that are serious with gender equality issues would find the findings of this research useful as it would guide them to adopt measures that would enable women who are also their members to be actively involved in political leadership. The study would be of importance to members of the general public to appreciate the problems women in political leadership positions face. The findings and recommendations of this research could be important to other researchers who may like to do further investigations concerning the problem. The findings would also be an addition to the literature on gender issues and Ghana's policy on gender.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

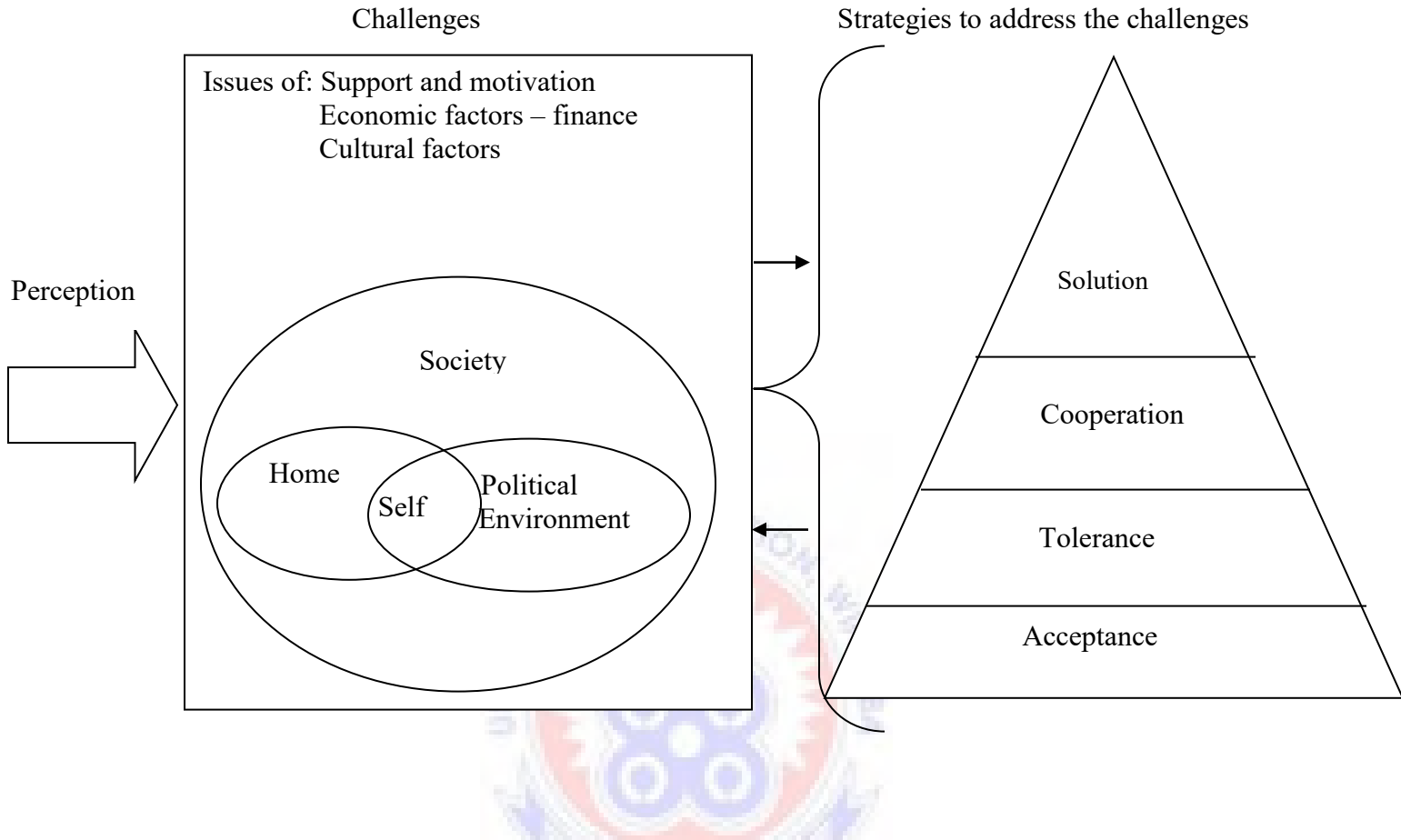


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Researcher's own construct

Figure 1 represents the conceptual framework for this study. The perceptions of the women leaders on leadership can influence the way they behave as leaders. How they perceive their role as leaders may bring challenges to them. If these women perceive leadership as a process of controlling, directing and managing affairs in order to achieve institutional goals they may be faced with challenges in the performance of these roles because society's expectation of women does not support that. On the other hand if they perceive leadership as service to mankind, they may also encounter some challenges.

In performing their leadership roles they may encounter personal challenges such as their educational background, profession, social attributes- interpersonal skills, confidence and competence level, among others. The home can also present challenges through both the nuclear and external family members. The traditional roles they are expected to perform at home can also constitute some challenges. Challenges originating from the political environment can come from the political party they belong to, political structure and the political process. The society as a whole may pose challenges relating to their religious affiliation, cultural beliefs and practices, traditional role expectations, finance, support and motivation. These factors variously operate at self, home and societal levels.

It is assumed that the actors use acceptance, tolerance, cooperation, empathy, among others to address the challenges. They may internalize the challenges as inevitable and so not attempt to find solutions. But this situation/problem could aggravate beyond their control and so disengage them from the leadership role. Alternatively, they might manage the challenges with the meager resources at their disposal, albeit with minimal success and rely on their interpersonal skills.

At this level, the women are able to work around the challenges to suit them and in the process the problems can be solved partially or completely. Some of the women may be able to face the challenges squarely. The women who are able to manage or solve the problems, weather the storm. These are the enduring ones who go on to assume leadership roles.

1.8 Organisation of the study

The work is made up of six chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, scope of the study, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Chapter Two primarily deals with the review of related literature. Issues discussed include the concept of political leadership, feminist theories, theoretical perspectives, gender in politics of Africa/Ghana, women in Ghanaian politics, the 1992 Constitution and International Instruments on women political participation and challenges of women in politics. The third chapter provides the methodological framework where the researcher presents and discusses the research design and method adopted, population and sample selection and the data gathering tools. Issues of data analysis, validity and reliability and research ethics are also addressed in this chapter. Chapter Four is the presentation of findings using percentages and thematic approach. The fifth chapter deals with the discussions whilst Chapter Six entails the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the review of related literature on political leadership with especial focus on women. The study aims at exploring the restrictions placed on women and to find out how such restrictions pose challenges to both women aspirants and those in political leadership. These women are at the various stages of their political career in democratic dispensations that are dominated by men. The essence of this review is to provide a framework which will serve as the basis for this research considering the views of writers and researchers on women in political leadership. The review is done under the following sub – sections: Feminist Theories, Theoretical Perspective, Gender in Politics of Africa/Ghana, Women in Ghanaian Politics, Constitutional and International instruments and Challenges of women in Political Leadership.

2.1 The Concept of Leadership

Several approaches characterize the literature on leadership. Some put emphasis on qualities inherent in a leader such as traits, skills or styles, other approaches examine leadership contexts like situations in which leadership is exercised while others emphasize interpersonal process (Eagly, 2007). Duodu (2001) asserts that leadership is the ability to organize and influence the efforts and resources of a group to achieve organizational goals.

According to Dua-Agyeman (2007) leadership refers to the quality of the behaviour of individuals, whereby they guide people in their activities in organized effort. He states that effective and developmental leadership is one that develops an ideal, loftier but realizable, leads in elaborating strategies, policies and programmes needed for a positive socio-cultural and economic shift in paradigm. Dua Agyeman further argues that effective and developmental leadership influences people toward predetermined goals which are meaningful, desirable and attainable; has character, capacity and credibility to manage the difficult transitions associated with nation-building.

Similarly, Astin, Cartter and Astin (2004) argue that leadership is a process that is ultimately concerned with fostering change and implies a process where there is movement from wherever we are now to some future place or condition that is different. They further explain that leadership implies intentionality, in the sense that the implied change is not random, that is change for change's sake, but is rather directed toward some future end or condition which is desired or valued. Accordingly, leadership is a purposive process which is inherently value-based.

Kellerman (2004) explaining who a leader is states that “a leader chooses a particular course of action and then in some way gets others to go along; or more subtly, the leader encourages the led to ‘choose’ the course that the group will follow ...” (p. xiii). In this process the leader influences the followers in so many ways while the followers also have some impact on the leader. Leaders affect their followers’ attitudes, beliefs, demands and needs; and the followers affect the leader’s style, qualities, beliefs and motivations, as they both transform the environment and are reflectively transformed by their own actions (Hay, 2002; Wildavsky, 2006). Both leaders and followers are

involved in a circular process of motivation and power exchange that is often difficult to break up into a causal sequence (Wildavsky, 2006).

It is therefore, important for the leader and the followers to collaborate in dealing with issues and in the performance of tasks. The feminist literature has shown that women tend to use nurturance to engage, communicate, and lead. The use of a collaborative process is viewed as leveling the playing field between leader and follower, and to create more egalitarian environment described as shared leadership (Eagly, 2007).

A political leader represents the interest of the group and work to bring development to the people. He or she takes decisions on behalf of the people, formulates and implements policies for the good of the people. Political leadership implies followership, as well as group tasks to be accomplished through innovative adaptation in a specific situation and institutional cultural context (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Nye, 2008).

According to Kamau (2010), in the context of a nation-state framework, political leadership implies a contractual relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. Political leadership is a special part of social leadership and affirm that leadership is related to power: a leader in the behavioural sense is a person who is able to modify the course of events (Wildavsky, 2006). Being able to modify the course of events demand an authority that will enable the followers to comply with the leader's decisions in the followers' own will.

The perceptions of female political leaders about leadership can influence their behaviour and this in a way may pose a challenge to them. If they perceive leadership as the authority given to them to organize and control people they may be interested in the

power relations between them and their followers. This may create problems for them. This is because most people, especially men, will not easily accept leadership and control from woman. On the other hand, if feminine and carer-role dominate they may be perceived as weak. Hence, there is the need for women in political leadership to find a balance between these extremes. Despite these, it could be noted that the presence of many women, especially feminists, in leadership roles throughout societal institutions can greatly speed the pace of social change toward gender equality (Eagly, 2007); equity and ensure social justice.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

This study was located within liberal feminist theory and Paulo Freire's theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed. Liberal feminism is concerned with democracy and claims individuals have the right to vote and to be voted for. Liberal feminism focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through their actions and choices. However, there is unequal power relations between men and women, and men are mostly at advantageous position. Liberal feminists are of the view that society holds the false belief that by their nature women are less intellectually and physically capable than men and tends to discriminate against women. Schumaker, Kiel and Heilke (2000) assert that liberal feminist theory holds the view that women should be provided with the same rights that men already have. They believe that although women and men are equal, certain restrictions have been placed on women. Such restrictions are inherent in customary laws and are justified by patriarchy. According to Tong (1989), female

subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that prevent them from succeeding in public activities.

Freire's (1970) theory indicates how oppression has been justified and overcome through mutual process. Both men and women seem to support the idea that political leadership is an arena for males. Women are therefore considered incompetent and this discourages some of them. Freire (1970:29, 30) observed the following;

Almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or "sub-oppressors". The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors.

Clearly, males dominate in the political arena and may not feel comfortable when women venture into that domain. This insecurity manifests itself in the manner men try to derail women from getting political positions (Okumu, 2008). Women struggle to penetrate and this may force them to behave as men. In the course of dealing with such challenges, they may be swayed away from their initial motivation for entering into politics. Such women leaders believe in their capabilities as leaders yet they may encounter challenges that could seriously impair their performance as leaders. Each of the women in political leadership in the Central Region of Ghana may experience different challenges hence the need to provide them with the opportunity to share their experiences. This is in support of Hooks (2000:67) as she explains;

Women do not need to eradicate difference to feel solidarity. We do not need to share common oppression to fight equally to end oppression. We do not need anti-male sentiments to bond us together, so great is the wealth of experience, culture, and ideas we have to share with one another...

2.3 Feminization Theories

Feminism is rooted in the Humanism of the Eighteenth century and in the Industrial Revolution (Kumari, 2006). In the past, women all over the world were kept out of the socio-political realm, and so feminism emerged as a movement to struggle for women's causes, particularly for gender justice and socio-economic, political and cultural equality (Kumari, 2006). This was to make sure that the world was a better place to live in for both males and females. Feminists advocate equal opportunity in terms of social, political, and economic prospects for all women to enable them contribute effectively towards the welfare of humanity, and Hooks (2000) notes, to end sexist oppression.

Hooks (2000) argues that the aim of feminism is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. Its primary objective is enhancement of the status of women through the pursuit of gender equality and equal rights for women regardless of race or class.

On the part of Malone (1998), feminists advocate the integration of women into the public sphere as well as the transformation of that public sphere so that neither women nor men must sacrifice family involvement for participation in society. Feminists therefore advocate women's integration into the public domain under circumstances where reproductive roles performed by them do not restrict their full participation. Hooks (2000) noted that feminism should be defined in political terms that stress collective as well as individual experience and challenges that will enable women to enter a new domain leaving behind the apolitical stance sexism decrees and develop political consciousness. It is believed that women develop their political consciousness if they enter the public domain (Hooks, 2000).

According to Tsikata (2011) within the movements that challenged gender oppression and fought for women's right there were different views concerning the origin and causes of the gender oppressive, hence addressing the problem demanded different solutions. Some of these movements came out with theories of feminism which include liberal, socialist and radical feminism.

2.3.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal theories were developed from the Seventeenth century onwards. Popular liberal feminists include Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Turbman. Wollstonecraft as cited by Tong (1989) indicated that society's view of women as more pleasure seeking and pleasure giving than men is wrong and encouraged women to use their voice to make decisions separate from decisions previously made for them. Liberal theorists argues that individuals have the right to own property, sell their labour and go about their lives within the legal framework that protects them from arbitrary interference by government or other individuals (Kumari, 2006).

Liberal feminists focus on social change through the promotion of legislation and regulation of employment practices. These later were combined with democratic claims that enabled individuals to have the right to choose their own representatives to govern them. In the early years, some women were denied the rights to vote and to be voted for because they were women. In this respect, Schumaker, Kiel and Heilke (2000) assert that women should be provided with the same rights that men already have. They believe women and men are equal and that certain restrictions have been placed on women; if

these are not removed equality can never be obtained. Such restrictions deny women certain choices. Hook (2000) believes being oppressed means the absence of choices.

The basis of women's exploitation, according to liberal feminists, is the different treatment given to men and women. There is discrimination in the way women are treated within the family set up and in the society as a whole. For instance women are not involved in decision-making within some families and in the society. Liberal feminists believe all people are created equal and there should be equality of opportunity for all irrespective of one's gender.

2.3.2 Marxist - Socialist Feminism

According to McCann and Kim (2013), early Marxists, including Marx Engels, Kautsky and Lenin saw capitalism drawing all women into the wage labour force, and saw this process destroying the sexual division of labour. They have incorporated women into an analysis of everyday life in capitalism. To such group all aspects of women's lives are seen to reproduce the capitalist system and women are all workers in the system. The Marxist feminists focused on housework and its relation to capital, some arguing that house work produces surplus value and that house workers work directly for capital (McCann & Kim, 2013:188).

Marxist - Socialist Feminism believes the division of labour is in line with gender role expectations. Females give birth and males are supposed to support family; hence the males are the suppliers of basic resources such as capital. By implication males are the ruling class. According to Harding (2004) the ruling class has an interest in concealing the way in which it dominates and exploits the rest of the population; presenting

interpretation that is distorted. Harding, as cited by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007), state “the worker that Marx is particularly concerned with: women have been excluded from positions in wage labour of the sort that Marx had in mind when he was looking at the nineteenth-century proletariat”(p.9).

“A Marxist assessment of the culture/nature binary argues that history can be seen as that in which human beings constantly objectify the natural world in order to control and exploit it” (Brittan & Maynard as cited in Collins 2009:78). Feminist scholarship points to the identification of women with nature as being central to women’s subsequent objectification and conquest by man (McClintock as cited in Collins, 2009). Marxian category of labour concerning both the interaction with humans and natural world helps to understand the dichotomy of nature and culture. This can help avoid the false choice of characterizing the situation of women as either “purely natural” or “purely social” (Harding, 2004:36).

According to Kumari (2006) socialist theory suggests that women’s oppression can be ended by the total abolition of the capitalist economics which puts emphasis on private ownership. Socialist feminists are against sexual division of labour and wish the full participation of men in child rearing, and stress a social construction of feminity that changes the particular ways in which gender is constructed.

Socialist feminism believes women’s oppression exist because of the nature of work women do within the family and in the economy. Women are considered sole home makers and this poses hindrances to their participation in various spheres, including politics. They believe there is the need to provide equal opportunities for women in the public sphere.

2.3.3 Radical Feminism

Radical feminists sometimes argue that the oppression of women by men was the original oppression, and serve as a model for all others (Burries as cited in McCann & Kim, 2013). The radical feminists theory is based on the idea that biologically-based subordination of women is a fundamental form of oppression, prior to class and race (Kumari, 2006). The pioneers of radical feminism include Shulamith Firestone, Kaithie Sarachild and Judith Brown. Radical feminism focuses on the hypothesis that patriarchy as a system of power organises society into a complex of relationships based on the assertion that male oppresses women. According to Hartmann, cited in McCann and Kim (2013), radical feminists use patriarchy to refer to a social system characterized by male domination over women. Radical feminism identified patriarchy and family as the key instruments in the oppression of women as men control the norms of acceptable sexual behaviour. They also believe that refusing to reproduce is the most effective way to escape the snares and oppression and for this reason speak out against all social structures because they are created by men.

Radical feminists argue that almost all spheres of life are dominated by men to the extent that if women are granted the same rights as those of men, without the consideration of their differing needs, it simply means that women are admitted into the environment which is already structured by men and will thus not have the same power as men (Van Zyl & Emeritus, cited in Ahakutor- Kwesi, 2009). Environment that is structured by men is virtually going to be the men's world because the men will institute conditions that will favour them at the expense of women. Radical feminism wants to see great change in the social structure that eliminate male dominance and patriarchal

structures. This ideology forms the basis of Women in Development approach designed and adopted by feminists and development agencies to try and achieve human centred development.

2.4 Gender in politics of Ghana

The literature on gender in politics is broad, involving gender inequality in politics, gender differences in political knowledge, socialization, attitudes, and women's place in political theory (Paxton, Kunovich & Hughes, 2007). Issues often discussed are expectation of leadership as a male dominated area, discrimination against women, discouragement, stereotypical ideas on the sexes, contents of manifestos, approaches used for inclusion of women in politics, double standards and gender determining peripheral positions for women.

According to Oppong, cited in Hagan (2006), women are political and social leaders and they perform such roles as queens, consorts, rulers and electors. Some women were officials and administrators in traditional bureaucracies in Dahomey (Benin), heads of diplomatic mission in Asante, warriors in Asafo companies, regiments in age-grade societies, such as Amazons of Dahomey (Benin) army. In Africa, the women were not relegated to the background considering the complementary roles they played as queens, heads of asafo companies and diplomatic missions (Oppong, cited in Hagan, 2006). O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers cited in Allah- Mensah (2005) reiterate that in indigenous African societies, women's political position varied extensively across the continent with some wielding extensive authority than others.

Notwithstanding these powers, there were some aspects of African culture that helped to keep women under subjugation. According to Dolphyne (1991) some aspects of African culture such as customs, traditions, and beliefs have over the years, helped to keep women under subjugation, and to make them feel generally inferior to men and incapable of operating at the same level as men in society. She went further to explain that these aspects of culture are the institution of marriage with its related bride-wealth, child marriage, polygamy, purdah, widowhood and inheritance of property, high fertility and puberty rites with specific reference to female circumcision. These cultural practices discriminate against women, establish and perpetuate inequality between the sexes. These practices make men superior over women and therefore powerful to control women in all their endeavours. The men dictate whether their wives should be involved in jobs outside the home and in decision making. Consequently, a woman's ability to enter into political leadership is subject to the approval of her husband if she is married; or the family members including the father if she is not married.

Leadership opportunities are the preserve of men and people are trained to uphold such beliefs. A study by Agbalajobi (2010) examined the theoretical perspective of the discrimination and inequality suffered by women in Nigeria by assessing the current status of women in politics and the problems encountered in their quest to participate in politics. Agbalajobi identified socialization of children as a means that has created mechanisms for the development of values that engendered several forms of discrimination against the female sex. He concluded that the intention of most women who participate in politics is basically to support their female folk; this is their

substantive responsibility and so it is on this platform that most women emerge as public office holders.

Despite the intention of most women, there are customary laws backing how males and females should lead their lives in Africa and in most instances there is some sort of discrimination in subtle ways in favour of males. Contrary to this, some people argue that the Constitution which contains the supreme laws of the land puts emphasis on equal rights and obligations under the law, hence there is no deliberate attempt to limit female participation. Such people back their argument with the idea that there is equality when it comes to one's ability to vote and to be voted for. However, in Ghana the Constitution allows a dual system of law, statutory and customary. Although there is equality under statutory laws and so enables one to vote and be voted for, the customary laws put restrictions in the way of females thus limiting their chances of being voted for. For instance, customarily, a married woman must seek the approval of the husband or his relatives in the absence of her husband before undertaking any activity outside the home.

In Ghana, leadership is sometimes equated to behaviours common to males and this may encourage some powerful men to sponsor and advocate for other males when there is opportunity for political leadership. This serves as disincentives to females who aspire and venture into political leadership. According to Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011), such biases accumulate and in aggregate can interfere in women's ability to see themselves and be seen by others as leaders. This may result in women's lack of confidence to opt for political positions as they might have internalised the fact that it is a terrain for men.

Effort to seek leadership roles can be met with discouragement which can affect a person's self-confidence and morale. The encouragement or discouragement may come from family members, friends or political party members especially those who have close contact with the woman in question. If the reaction of the people turns out to be encouraging, it serves as a morale booster. Receiving such validation for one's self-view as a leader boosts self-confidence which increases one's motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). On the contrary if one is unable to get positive validation for leadership attempts, his/her self-confidence as well as motivation to seek developmental opportunities, experiment and take on new leadership roles is affected (Day, Harrison & Halpin, 2009). In Ghanaian society, men are encouraged to succeed in any endeavour because they have been brought up to be the best or the first in whatever they do. Women, on the other hand, are not encouraged like their male counterparts. This may be considered as one of the reasons why there are very few women in political leadership in Ghana.

Agbalajobi (2010) maintains that there is consensus that men possess superior strength, are competitive, self-reliant and willing to hustle in their political endeavours, whereas women are considered too passive, caring and sensitive to engage in politics and governance. These personal qualities are acquired through the socialization process as often males are raised to be independent and assertive while women are trained to be dependent on men. A study conducted by the South African Commission on Gender Equality in 2007 revealed that more than 30 percent of the respondents believe women are too emotional to handle high-level leadership positions (Commission on Gender

Equality, 2005). According to Gouws (2008), it is common for stereotypical ideas to inform perceptions about women's abilities.

Previous research by Dolan (2004), Herrnson, Lay and Stokes (2003), and Lawless (2004) shows that women benefit when issues play into their stereotypic strengths and suffer when the agenda is dominated by men's issues. Hence, it is necessary to examine the manifestos of political parties to ensure that the issues presented do not give advantage to one sex at the expense of the other if gender parity is of concern to the party. Also, desirable qualities, such as honesty, morality, compassion, and the capacity to handle social issues, are associated with female gender (Bystrom, Banwart, Kaid & Robertson, 2004). Despite this, it must be noted that voters normally assess candidates in an election based on their political beliefs and competence. However, in the absence of specific information about a candidate's political beliefs, gender appears to be the primary cue used by participants to infer a candidate's political outlook (Huddy & Terkildsen, cited in Fulton, 2012). Such inferences are normally not in favour of women.

Inferences that the electoral environment is gender neutral because women and men equally perform well when they run, rests on the assumption that men and women are similar in terms of all of the characteristics that influence electoral outcomes except for one- gender (Fulton, 2012). If men and women possess the same level of competency then it is expected that the electoral environment presents equal grounds for them to compete. However, this is normally not the case as sometimes gender stereotypes are used to discourage women while presenting advantage to men because they are preferred unless the women candidates are of superior quality than the male candidates. Women can be weighed down by gender stereotypes: the directive behaviours that people

associate with leadership tend to be viewed as not typical or attractive in women (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007). According to Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) it may result in self sealing where women are under represented in leadership positions which validate entrenched system and beliefs that prompt and support men's bids for leadership which in turn maintain the status quo.

“At the individual level, voters may stereotype female candidates and prefer males; however, these effects will be masked in the aggregate if women candidates hold superior quality ...” (Fulton, 2012: 304). This implies women who appeal to voters are those who stand out in terms of their capabilities and competencies. However, there should be gender parity in electoral success and this in a way will ensure democratic environment which upholds fair play. If discrimination exists then increasing the number of female candidates may not completely address women's underrepresentation problem. This indicates that much of the motivation for change will depend on the voters' desire to vote for women.

A couple of approaches are used to ensure the inclusion of women in political leadership. Many adopt an “add-women-and-stir” approach (Martin & Meyerson, 1998:312). This approach assumes that gender does not or should not matter for leadership development. Others believe in adopting “fix- the- women” approach (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). This approach supports the idea that women have not been socialized to compete successfully in the world of men and so they must be trained and taught the skills their male counterparts have acquired over the years in political leadership. Mentorship is very important when it comes to this approach.

Kelemen (2008) in a study found that while men's attention in parliamentary deliberations is shared among several issues, women tend to deal with only a limited number of well-defined themes such as social welfare, health care, education and employment. Kelemen (2008) concludes that the current proportion of women in parliament does not enable women to sufficiently change the existing conditions and that cooperation required for a successful representation of issues is hindered by confrontative atmosphere of parliament.

A study conducted by Bhattla, Walia, Khanna and Verna (2012) in India was on opportunities and challenges of women's political participation in India. The study focused on gathering evidence on whether Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Government Institutions) are gender responsive institutions and the extent to which they are playing the role in addressing strategic gender interest at local level meetings in three districts in India. The study revealed that most of the issues prioritised at local meetings are either in the context of available schemes for women or are around their practical needs and that the community appears as a critical factor influencing both women and men's decisions to contest, in conjunction with their own interest. The findings also indicate that encouragement from spouse emerges as one of the primary reasons attributed to success in the elections by women across the districts and by men in Mysore which is one of the three districts. It was revealed that the family remains a key determinant of success and participation in political process.

According to House-Miamba, cited in Sossou (2011), women in Ghana are underrepresented because few of them hold political offices or participate in formal political organization. Two interrelated factors that explain the political representation

are, firstly the perception of politics by most people including women as quintessential male sphere of action, one in which women are both unwelcome and ineffective (House-Miamba, cited in Sossou, 2011). The second argument is that well-educated and wealthy women pursue politics to reflect their class rather than gender interest (House-Miamba, cited in Sossou, 2011). It is in the light of this that Pinto, cited in Kamau (2010) contends that once women occupy political positions they forget the plight of their fellow women. While this is probable, it must be noted that there are fewer women in such situations, hence their collective influence is minimal. They are therefore unable to routinely implement their political agenda. People, especially women, see them as ambitious to wield power, but incapable of pushing ahead the needs and interest of other women. Women in positions of authority are either considered too aggressive or not aggressive enough and what appears assertive, self-confident, or entrepreneurial in a man often looks abrasive, arrogant, or self-promoting in a woman (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007).

Merely being a successful woman in a male domain can be regarded as a violation of gender norms warranting sanctions (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). However, when women performing traditionally male roles are seen as conforming to feminine stereotypes, they tend to be liked but not respected (Rudman & Glilck 2001:744): they are judged too soft, emotional, and unassertive to make tough decisions and to come across as sufficiently authoritative (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Gender plays a key role in the actual positions given to men and women while in political leadership. It has been observed that normally men acquire the positions that involve them in actual decision-making roles such as planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and policies. They are found in positions that enable them to

influence policies and project. Such positions include presidents, cabinet members, parliamentarians at the national level, chairperson, vice chairman, secretary, organizers, etc. in the political party arena. There are few women in positions that enable them to influence policies. Most of the women are at the periphery positions such as women organizer and deputy, treasurer and vice treasurer despite their capabilities. It has been observed that people in such positions can hardly influence decision making. A study by Allah- Mensah (2005) indicates that 69.5% of the 1,777 participants were certain that women are equally capable of taking leadership roles or positions just as men.

In terms of political appointment women are normally sent to ministries that have something to do with their traditional roles such as health, education, women and children's affairs. A study conducted by Neuman (1998) in the United States involving women legislators found that women take keen interest in decisions concerning issues of education, health, gender violence, women's economic conditions. Similarly, Gouws and Kotse's (2007) study on the values of women political leaders found that women in general are more progressive in the values around issues pertaining to gender equality such as abortion, birth control, divorce and homosexuality while men are less progressive. Apparently, the way women are socialized over the years has affected their interest, values and perspectives in their work and life in general. This sometimes puts them in disadvantaged positions.

According to Bari (2005) women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture and society. On the part of Bowles, Bear and Thompson (2010) most often, women negotiate to overcome disadvantage and unfair treatment. While negotiation is a

critical skill for all leaders, it serves a particularly important function for women leaders as it gives them the opportunity to counter the effects of gender inequalities. Assuming the role as change agents by improving their capacity to create a sense of urgency for change, craft and communicate a vision of the future, get stakeholder buy-in, motivate and inspire people demands using influence and persuasion which is very difficult to accomplish (Bowles, Bear & Thompson, 2010).

According to Kamau (2010), some African countries have already attained the critical mass threshold of 33 per cent women representation in decision making. In Rwanda, women parliamentary representation stands at 56% while Uganda and Tanzania record 31 and 30 per cent respectively. However, there are few women in political leadership in Kenya. According to Kamau (2010), this is due to lack of affirmative action law, and gender insensitive male political culture. The dilemma women face today is how to change the attitudes and perceptions that they cannot perform or engage in full decision-making on matters that affect society. Namibia and South Africa have constitutions that provide for affirmative action to enhance the numbers of women in policy and decision-making positions. In South Africa, 20% of parliamentary seats and 50% of local governing council seats are reserved for women (African Center for Women/Economic Commission for Africa [ACW/ECA], 1998). Angola, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe also have quota legislation guaranteeing certain numbers of women in legislative assemblies. However, vigilance is still called for to prevent backsliding and political manipulation (ACW/ECA, 1998).

In Ghana, and in the Central Region in particular, there are very few women in political leadership as compared to their male counterparts. Although women in Ghana

had been involved in decision-making to some extent before colonialism, they were ignored during the colonial period. This in a way affected women's involvement in decision-making during and after independence.

2.5 Women in Ghanaian Politics.

Women played significant role in the traditional set up in Africa. Their roles included being teachers in their communities and socialization of children to fit well into their societies. In Ghana one important political role performed by women at the traditional level is queenship. They play a leading role in Ghana in the traditional set up. They are entrusted with the nomination of chiefs who are supposed to succeed a deceased or a destooled one. They know the rightful person to ascend the throne considering the genealogy of the royal family. Prominent queens in Ghana's history are Nana Dokua-the queen of Akyem Abuakwa state and Yaa Asantewaa, queen of Ejisu state. Nana Dokua is also reputed to have developed the Asafo and led the Akyem Abuakwa state troops in collaboration with coastal states- the Fantes- in the battle of Akatamanso in 1826 while Yaa Asantewaa also led the Asante army in the Yaa Asantewaa War of 1901(Frimpong & Obeng 2010).

With the advent of colonialism, the power wielded by queens was gradually lost. Colonialism did not favour women as they were relegated to the background relative to the political role women played in their societies before the arrival of Europeans. Christian missionaries and colonial administrators brought with them Victorian conceptions of the place of women in society and so looked down on the traditional communities where women played complementary roles with men in the public domain

(Lithur, 2006). The queens were ignored in terms of formulation of policies and exercising of political authority. Only men were involved in the political system of indirect rule they introduced. According to Lithur (2006: 72), "... the rigid colonial structures limited the queen mothers' participation in the formulation of the colonial political order and excluded them from the key forum..." Similarly, O' Barr and Firmin-Sellers state "European administrators imposed a legal and cultural apparatus that undermined women's traditional bases of power; women became politically and economically subordinated and marginalized" (cited in Allah- Mensah, 2005:12).

The British brought their idea of public/private divide and considered politics as a male endeavour. There was a distinction between the public and private domains. Women were expected to be involved with jobs at home while men were involved in decision making and jobs outside the home. Some people believe that the private sphere is the proper place for women and those issues concerning the family should be their priority. The 'private' and the 'public' for women were two distinct arenas, a distinction which was jealously guarded and perpetuated by the patriarchal system, thereby affecting women's role in the political and subsequently the public sphere (Allah- Mensah, 2005). The women were not expected to participate in activities that were within the public realm such as politics. For example, there were no women in the 1850 and the 1916 Gold Coast Legislative Council. The twenty-one member Legislative Council formed in 1916 had three paramount chiefs and three educated Ghanaians at the time. These qualifications favoured only men because of the gendered educational system and the fact that there was no female chief occupying paramount seat (Allah- Mensah, 2005). Moreover men were recognized as the traditional ruling class. This idea encouraged

people including women themselves, to discourage other women from venturing into politics.

Females were sidelined to the extent that when education, which is considered 'historic accident' so far as colonialism was concerned (Frimpong & Obeng, 2010), when introduced, girls were excluded at first. Later when they were enrolled they were taught how to be good wives (Manu, 1991). Manu (1991) further contended that the educational opportunities emphasized good behaviour and feminine skills such as needlework, crocheting and cooking. It was intended to create a pool of "better wives" for the increasing educated clerks, teachers, catechists and a few professional men. Similarly, Tsikata (1999) notes that the prevailing education at the time of colonialism accentuated discrimination against women not only in the course content but also in numbers and in the taxonomy of jobs.

At independence in 1957, there was no woman in parliament or in the cabinet, probably the legacy of colonialism. It was in 1960 when Dr. Nkrumah through a quota system by the passage of the Representation of the People's Act (Women Members), Act No. 8 of June 1960 which enabled ten women to be elected to the National Assembly (Lithur, 2006; Dohu, 2007). Allah-Mensah (2005) argues that the Convention People's Party headed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah rewarded the hard work and general contribution of women to the independence struggle. It could be seen that women political participation was good in Dr. Nkrumah's administration from 1957-1966. Women, especially traders, were keen supporters of the CPP government. According to Tsikata (1999) the formation of women's groups such as the Ghana Women's League (GWL) and the Ghana Federation of Women (GFW) and later the National Council of Ghana

Women (NCGW) helped some women to be active in politics. The NCGW and other groups were systematically and strategically co-opted into the CPP and given party membership cards.

Tsikata (1999: 79) states:

An assessment of the CPP government's policies towards women has noted that it consciously encouraged the participation of women in politics and public life with the result that a few women held high political offices as members of parliament, deputy ministers and district commissioners, and that these were not acts of tokenism, but recognition of their abilities.

During Ghana's Second Republic in 1969, only one woman, Mrs. Lydia Akan Bodinpo Kublenu was among the 140 parliamentarians who were sworn in and it was after a bye-election in 1970 that Mrs. Catherine Tadam was also elected into the House (Dohu, 2007). The Progress Party's administration headed by Dr. Abrefa Busia in 1969-1972 did not make special provisions for women's political participation. The 3rd Republic under People's National Party headed by Dr. Hilla Limann which began in 1979 witnessed five women (3.5%) winning the parliamentary elections during the elections. There were one hundred and forty parliamentarians during that era.

Ghana's experience in terms of coups d'état was not favourable to women political participation, although the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM) that emerged under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government and National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration from 1981-2000 reawakened women's political participation to some extent. Even though the Movement did not embrace all Ghanaian women as it was politically affiliated to the PNDC and the NDC, some of the members were prepared politically to partake in political leadership when democratic rule was later re-introduced in 1992.

Table 2.1 is on women Parliamentary representation in the Fourth Republic of Ghana which started in 1992.

Table 2.1. Women Parliamentary Representation in the Fourth Republic of Ghana

Year	Government	Total Parliamentarians	Female Parliamentarians	Percentage
1992	NDC (1 st Parliament)	200	16	8%
1996	NDC (2 nd Parliament)	200	19	9.5%
2000	NPP (3 rd Parliament)	200	18	9%
2004	NPP (4 th Parliament)	230	25	10.8%
2008	NDC (5 th Parliament)	230	20	8.7%
2012	NDC (6 th Parliament)	275	30	10.9%

Source: Adapted from Different Sources.

Women's representation in ministerial positions has equally not been encouraging. Between 1997 and 2004, there were two women among the cabinet ministers. From 1997 to 2000, out of the 10 regional ministers, there were two women (Kwapong, 2009). Between 2001 and 2004, out of seventeen ministers only three were women (Kwapong, 2009). These women were Hajia Alima Mahama-Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs, Mrs. Gladys Asmah-Ministry for Fisheries, and Ms. Sophia Akuffo- Minister of Aviation. Out of the 110 District Chief Executives only 12 were women (10.9%). In 2007/2008, there were two deputy regional ministers. The fifth Parliament of the fourth Republic had a female Speaker of Parliament. At the grassroots level women's participation in political leadership had not been encouraging.

With the re-introduction of decentralization in 1988 in Ghana under the Local Government Act (1988) and PNDC Law 207 some of the women who had some political experience in the various political organisations contested and won the district level elections held in 1988 thus becoming District Assembly representatives. Women's representation as elected assembly members has been low over the years. For example, 3 percent of the elected assembly members in 1994 were women. In the 1998 District Assembly Elections, out of 4820 elected candidates, only 196 (4 %) were women. There was an increase in the 2002 elections when out of 4583, a total of 341 women were elected (The Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004). The NPP Government has tried to increase the number of female assembly members by increasing the quota of female appointed members at the District Assembly level from 30 per cent (which is a constitutional requirement) to 50 per cent in the year 2002. This resulted in women constituting 35.5 per cent of appointed members for 97 out of the 138 districts. The 2006 district assembly elections showed a little increase from the 2002 result. Out of the 4734 elected members, 433 representing 9 per cent were women.

Apparently, women's political participation and leadership in Ghana, has improved over the years, but only marginally, yet they constitute 51 per cent of the population and the fact that there are some international instruments and constitutional provisions to ensure equality at all levels.

2.6 The 1992 Constitution and International Instruments on women political participation

World polity perspectives argue for the existence of a world society comprising international organizations, professional associations and communities of discourse that actively shape the behaviour of nation-states, organizations and individuals through their activities such as the creation, promotion and legitimation of world culture that translate into institutions, policies, and norms (Lechner & Boli, 2005, Meyer, 2007). Swiss's (2009) study examines the decoupling phenomena by exploring what factors influence the gap between granting women the right to stand for elections and the eventual election of the first woman to parliament in 92 countries of the developing world from 1945 to 1999. It emerged that world polity influence on the nation-state extends beyond the adoption of policy scripts to bear on the actual implementation of world culture models. According to Swiss, the granting of the right to stand for election to women directly resulted from the international influence of the world society. Countries, organizations and individuals may come together based on a common interest to formulate policies and to guide their members. The United Nations, African Union, Commonwealth of Nations are examples of such groups.

The United Nations, being the organization with the largest membership of 193 countries, ensures global interconnection among states of the world. The UN was formed at the end of World War II to pave the way for global commitment to the respect for human rights and the restoration of the dignity of all persons regardless of colour, sex, and creed. The United Nations established the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 1946 just a year after the formation of UN in 1945. In 1952 the Convention on the

Political Rights of Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). This Convention was one of the early covenants adopted in the area of women's rights promotion and protection and it affirms the rights of women to vote and hold public office without discrimination. In 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) reaffirmed the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) principle of the right to participate in public and political life without discrimination. Women's participation in political decision-making positions was recognised as a political right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The United Nations had supported active participation of women in the development agenda. The UN General Assembly endorsed the World Plan of Action for implementation of the objectives of the International Women's Year and proclaimed 1976 – 1985 as the UN Decade for women with the theme: equality, development and peace. Equality ensures legal equality for women in areas such as access to property, credit, voting and to be voted for, citizenship in order to prevent discrimination in any form. If there is equality, development and peace will subsequently be assured.

In Ghana, various institutions have been set up to encourage women's participation in development and to ensure that objectives set out by the international bodies on equality are met. The National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) was set up by the Government in 1975 to ensure that the objectives of the international year and those of the United Nations Decade for Women were achieved in Ghana.

Dolphyne (1991: 44) states:

The National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) initiated programmes, projects and activities during the period 1975-1986 to increase the level of women's participation in public life at the local and national levels, to improve their access to formal education and

professional training, and to improve their standard of living and their status in society by increasing their income-earning capacity. The activities of the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) were aimed at generating in women confidence in their own capabilities, enhancing their self-esteem and improving their status in their society by making them participate actively in and contribute effectively to, the development of their individual communities and the nation as a whole.

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. CEDAW moved the right of political participation another step toward affirming the obligation of State Parties to take affirmative action to accelerate the participation of women in politics and their representation in other public decision-making positions. Articles 2 to 4 of the CEDAW call on state parties to actively pursue the elimination of discrimination in women's political participation through legal and temporary measures and affirmative action whilst Article 7 instructs state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of a country. Article 8 brings women's political rights to the international arena. CEDAW stipulates equal enjoyment of political rights without discrimination on sex basis.

The United Nations Third Conference on Women was held in Nairobi in 1985 and the policy document was entitled “Forward Looking Strategies to the year 2000”. This document covered other issues including the need to recognize and give true value to the crucial role of women in the society. Issues of equality, development and peace which were the themes for the decade for women were reviewed. Women’s political participation was also addressed by the document. The Nairobi conference also focused on the need to give women a share of power on equal terms with men to ensure gender

equality and equity. There was the need for development to be considered from gender perspective.

Equal opportunities for both men and women is a necessity to ensure development in its totality as people will be free to harness their potential and be part of the process of attaining development. Such opportunities are expected to be sustainable to enable both the current and incoming generations to benefit from it. Gender equality is a core value and fundamental principle of the Commonwealth, and Heads of Government committed themselves to this principle in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, for example, enumerates certain fundamental human rights and freedoms for all people in the country. Section 17, subsections 1 and 2 state all persons shall be equal before the law and a person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status respectively. Section 27 state women shall be guaranteed equal rights to training and promotion without any impediments from any person (Republic of Ghana, 1992). These constitutional provisions stress non-discrimination between the sexes and women's rights issues. Equal enjoyment of human rights by men and women is a universally accepted principle reaffirmed by the Vienna declaration, adopted by 171 states at the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 (UNDP, 1995). According to that declaration both men and women are to be given:

- (i) equal access to basic social services, including education and health
- (ii) equal opportunities for participation in political and economic decision-making
- (iii) equal reward for equal work
- (iv) equal protection under the law

(v) elimination of discrimination by gender and violence against women

(vi) equal rights of citizens in all aspects of life, both public such as the workplace and private such as the home (UNDP, 1995:58).

The Vienna Declaration focused on equality of opportunity to both men and women in terms of social services, political and economic decision-making, and protection under the law.

The Economic and Social Council endorsed target of having 30 per cent women in positions at decision-making levels by 1995 and set out conditions that government should follow in order to achieve the target. Section 190 of the Economic and Social Council's target urges governments to set specific targets and implement measures to substantially increase the number of women to achieve equal representation of women and men; Section 192 is on the need for governments to take positive actions to train women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision-making positions, monitor women's access to senior levels of decision making and review criteria for recruitment in order not to discriminate against women. These are expected to ensure gender balance at all levels of the economy.

According to Barrett (1995), there has been formal political apparatus developed in the last 20 years for women. The United Nations Fourth Conference held in September 1995 in Beijing reinforces the need for women to be fully integrated into politics and decision making at all levels as depicted in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Beijing Platform for Action 1995 had one of its key indicators on women in politics and decision making. The strategic objective G.1 entreats government to take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making

while the strategic objective G.2 is on the need to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership at all levels. “Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved” (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995:1).

The United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) Human Development also advocates a 30 percent threshold as a prelude to the 50 percent women representation in leadership. According to UNDP, women are nowhere near half of the decision-making structures (UNDP, 1999). This target is still a dream for most women. Furthermore, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 also call for gender parity in decision-making. For instance, under the MDG framework, the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament is one of the three indicators used to measure progress toward achieving Goal 3, that is, to promote gender equality and empower women.

State parties are encouraged to take all appropriate measures to place women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations (Bello, 2003). The African Women’s Rights Protocol adopted in 2003 by the African Union (AU) further affirms the principle of equal participation and the use of affirmative action to ensure equal and effective participation of women in politics. Women's political participation encompasses a wide range of actions and strategies. It includes voting and voter education, candidacy in national and local elections, lending

support to candidates who carry gender-sensitive agenda, campaigning against those who have policies that are anti-women's rights', and advocating the integration of a women's rights agenda in the platforms of candidates and parties (Bello, 2003).

In July, 2004 the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and they adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). The Declaration was to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the highest level in Africa (African Union, 2009). By June 2009, the African Women's Rights Protocol was ratified by 27 countries and signed by 45 African countries.

A study by Paxton, Huges and Green (2006) on the international women's movement and Women's Political Representation 1893 – 2003 was to find out how the growth and discourse of the international women's movement have affected women's acquisition of political power over time. Event history techniques were used. Issues considered included female suffrage, first female parliamentarian and achievement of 10, 20 and 30 percent women in countries national legislature. The findings revealed that increasing pressure for inclusion of women in international politics and changing discourse of the international women's movement explain these multiple political outcomes. It was also revealed that country level political, social structural and cultural characteristics, cause countries to act in conjunction with or in opposition to global pressure.

Although their study considers women's acquisition of 10, 20 and 30 percent of women in national legislature as an achievement, looking at the time (over 100 years) it could be realized serious measures need be taken in order to improve the level of

women's participation in political leadership. According to Keleman (2008), if women's parliamentary proportion is close to the critical mass level of 30%, reactions to women politicians will be different, resistance to women public role-taking will diminish, women politicians' performance and efficiency will change; likewise political culture (style) and discourse.

Fardaus (2006) believes women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. It is not only a demand for social justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests, needs and perspectives to be taken into consideration. According to the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) (2007) both practitioners and scholars agree that it is important to have equal numbers of women and men in political office for the following arguments:

- The justice argument – women account for approximately half the population and therefore have the right to be represented as such.
- The experience argument – women's experiences are different from men's and need to be represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation. These different experiences mean that women 'do politics' differently from men.
- The interest argument—the interests of men and women are different and even conflicting and therefore women are needed to be in representative institutions to articulate the interests of women.
- The critical mass argument—women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent women's interests when they achieve certain levels of representation.

- The symbolic argument - women are attracted to political life if they have role models in the arena.
- The democracy argument—the equal representation of women and men enhances democratization of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies.

Gender equality was reaffirmed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009. This is anchored in the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA) (Commonwealth Secretariat Information Brief, 2011). The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA) draws on international commitments for the realisation of women’s rights enshrined in CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Kelemen (2008) conducted a study on women MP’s representation in Hungarian parliament from 1998-2006. The findings of the study revealed that women’s percentage in Hungarian parliament had remained at a low level (around 10%). According to Kelemen (2008), the review of nomination policies verified the hypothesis that the reason for women’s low proportion primarily lies in parties nomination practices and that there is no conscious effort on the part of political parties to provide equality for women during elections.

Begum (2009) in similar study conducted in Bangladesh revealed that women represent only two per cent of the parliamentary seats, hold not more than 3% ministerial positions. The study further revealed that nearly 80 per cent of the Parliamentary Standing Committees have no women. Begun believes the government’s affirmative measure has conceived a highly flawed vision that essentially promotes disrespect for the

notion of 'equality' and makes women MPs 'ornamental and passive beneficiaries'. In addition, the sociocultural dynamics that legitimate women's inequality have posed a serious challenge to the constitutional approach to equality, exacerbating by political requirements that force women to further remain beyond the purview of power.

Kamau's (2010) study in Kenya confirmed the view that lack of a critical mass of women in parliament is a major constraint for women politician to effect significant and positive difference towards transforming the male-dominated culture of parliament, public policy and influencing resources allocation in a gender equitable manner.

Swiss (2009), revealed in a study that international and intergovernmental organizations play a key role in facilitating and promoting the diffusion and spread of similar models and institutions among nation-states. A similar study by Bush (2011) on international legitimacy of gender quotas adopted two causal pathways, that is, directly in post conflict peace operation, and indirectly by encouraging countries especially those who rely on foreign aid to show their commitment to democracy. An event history analysis was used. Bush argues that international incentives have been key to the global diffusion of quotas. Current literature indicates that promoting gender equality is a key aspect of aiding democracy abroad and gender quotas have gradually come to be seen as an important and legitimate part of democratization. The findings revealed that there is strong evidence that international incentives are positively and significantly related to a country's likelihood of adopting a gender quota. The article shares constructivist scholars interest in the development of ideas about appropriate political conduct. Bush (2011) believes quota laws demonstrate countries' intentions to include different groups in the political process. It could be realised that normally quota is used to boost women's

representation in politics. In Ghana, apart from the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) era when President Nkrumah purposefully brought in 10 women through quota, no government since then has been interested and committed in adopting quota system in bringing women on board especially in a critical area such as the parliament.

According to Tandoh-Offin (2010), Ghana, like many emerging democracies in the developing world, have seen the emergence of a new form of women's organization and participation in the agenda setting and alternative specification stages of the public policy process. These groups operate without reference to political ideology, and thus they do not serve any particular political interest or philosophy.

The women's movement in Ghana is dominated by civil society organizations and NGOs that represent women's interests at various levels of public decision-making. Notable groups and institutions include the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA International), and the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs (FAWE). Other groups are the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), The Christian Council of Ghana and other development and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These interest groups and their coalitions have made significant impacts in the areas of property and inheritance rights, domestic violence, and women's equality (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Prah, as cited in Tandoh-Offin, 2010). Despite these impacts, it seems there has not been dramatic change in women's political participation and leadership in Ghana and in the Central Region in particular.

Swiss (2009), believes while some might argue that society, rather than the state's characteristics may play the greatest role in explaining the gap and determining women's political participation, research has shown that to a large extent it is state and political structures that have the most influence on the phenomenon of women's political participation (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Paxton, Hughes & Green, 2006). Although the international institutions and the constitutional provisions put emphasis on gender equality especially in decision-making, it could be realised that they have failed to address the root causes of the pervasive inequality. Hence, despite the target that some of these international institutions have set, achieving gender equality will continue to be far off. Besides, countries like Ghana seem to lack the political will to adhere to the demands of international institutions to a large extent although efforts have been made to formulate laws and regulations in line with the international treaties ratified.

2.7 Challenges Confronting Women in Politics

Research on the causes of women's persistent under-representation in leadership positions has shifted away from a focus on actors' intentional efforts to exclude women to consideration of so-called "second generation" forms of gender bias the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women's advancement that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as work place structures, practices and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favour men (Calás & Smircich, 2009, Kolb & Mc Ginn, 2009; Sturm, 2001). According to Kamau (2010), globally, the basic constraints women face as they attempt to participate in politics, though occurring in varying magnitudes in different countries, tend to be broadly similar. A combination of cultural, social, economic, and political factors serve as challenges militating against women's inclusion in politics.

2.7.1 Cultural factors

The traditional role performed by women may constitute a challenge to some women in political leadership while in the same vein performance of such roles may train and encourage some women to opt for political leadership. According to Agbalajobi (2010) women's role include mothering, producing, time managing, community organizing and social political activism. Women are well noted for mobilization of people for political action because they easily convince people to share in their ideas and organize them in the community. They have been managing the affairs at home and are involved in the social, economic and political life of the household at various levels depending upon how they are involved in decision making at home.

Gender division of labour over the years stipulates productive roles mainly for men while reproductive roles have been reserved for women. As mothers they know the needs of people and may be in better position to work hard to provide the needs of the people in the community. Being a mother can however also have negative effects on women in political leadership if they are considered as full time mothers nurturing their children as they may not be able to have time to perform their leadership roles well in the public domain. Also, it is perceived that they may exhibit certain characteristics peculiar to mothers such as being sympathetic, caring and tolerating others even if they are not performing their duties as expected. These characteristics are not considered worthwhile for political leadership.

Tsikata (2001) believes gender relations pose unequal and discriminatory situation for women. This is exhibited in sexual division of labour, societal arrangements that favour men as they control more resources and the power vested in men to take

important decision at all levels of power structure. Tsikata further states that there are gender ideologies that justify these differences as natural, functional, logical and reasonable. Through socialization process sexual division of labour is perpetuated.

Similarly, Jalalzai and Krook (2010:11) state:

These norms are rooted in the public-private divide, which plays a major role in socializing women and men into prescribed gender roles, calling into question the legitimacy of women's political engagement and conferring private sphere responsibilities on women that prevent them from pursuing public office.

These cultural and ideological arguments against women's right to participate in politics create substantial barriers to women's political participation (Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007).

Women face prejudice as leaders because people tend to assume that leadership is a masculine trait. And when women do lead they face a problem- people evaluate autocratic behaviour by women more negatively than the same behaviour by men (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Thus, even in countries where women have made gains in employment or education, they face cultural barriers to participation in politics. For example, 25% of the U.S. population still says that men are better suited emotionally to politics, and 15% of Americans agreed with the statement "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men" (Lawless & Theriault 2005).

The UN Status of Women Commission in 1990 pointed out that in Africa the main obstacles to women emancipation is the pervasive influence of traditional social attitudes and customs deeply rooted in what are referred to in some cases as the feudal, patriarchal system (UN as cited in O' Neil, 1992). Cultural values and norms are playing

crucial roles in socializing girls and boys. Occupations especially assigned to girls from childhood are at best elementary school teacher, nurse, receptionist or personal secretary, while the field of politics is highly considered as male-dominated (Zaman, 2007). Socializing people in these ways for a long time imprint on their minds that these are natural and must be observed hence under-representation of women in politics.

Gender division of labour normally creates stereotypical assumptions. Stereotypical assumptions about division of labour such as women are good as cooks, sex providers, continue to discourage women from being present and active in the political arena (Zaman, 2012; Ongom, 1999). Such tasks are demanding to the extent that women who play these roles religiously can hardly be present and active in political dispensation of their community and the nation as a whole. Consequently, some people think women are not socialized to take part in the political leadership and they normally discourage women to venture into politics. The women who are able to enter into politics face lots of challenges as some of the people including women doubt their capabilities. The assessment report written by Mawawa (1999) to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) indicates that challenges such as cultural and traditional barriers; the persistent unequal division of labour and responsibilities within the households slowed down the progress of women participation in politics.

According to the Commonwealth Secretariat Information Brief (2011), perceived obstacles for the under-representation of women is mostly symptomatic of persistent gender stereotypes, conflict between family and work demands, patriarchy and the lack of an enabling political environment, inadequate funding to support female candidates, the absence of special measures/quotas, low literacy levels, the lack of job security in

politics, the absence of female role models and a lack of training for political participation. These are perceived obstacles in the way of women. A study conducted by International Center for Research on Women (2012) in India revealed that even though women are moving into leadership positions through both reserved and unreserved seats and that this has brought positive outcomes such as increased self confidence and improved status in the family and community, women still face a number of barriers. According to the study such barriers include low literacy, poor preparatory training, a high household work burden and negative attitudes towards women in public office that constrain their ability to fulfil their governance roles or that make them unlikely to re-contest.

On the part of Ferguson and Katundu (1994), there are a number of negative reports about women who dared to enter into politics in Zambia. For example, they found that some Zambia women were threatened with divorce and forbidden by their husbands to enter into politics and even in national parliaments; women have difficulties being accepted for who they are and are not taken seriously and/or even listened to. In Ghana, according to Sossou (2011), participants in her study indicated that marital obligations to husbands, children and families are obstacles to their full engagement in politics. Ongom (1999) argues that women are given ministries that are considered useless to the economy and therefore not so demanding. This is simply to prove the point that women cannot take on hectic jobs in politics.

Tamale (1999) in her study of women in parliamentary politics in Uganda found that female parliamentarians are frequently subjected to humiliating sexual stereotypes and derogatory remarks and sexual harassment. Even though women are becoming active

in politics, they are still too often subordinates in the political arena. It is evident that educated women and gender activists who have shown interest in politics have been assaulted physically to teach them to stay out of politics (Nzomo, cited in Allah- Mensah 2005). Politicians and political leaders view contemporary African female politicians as ambitious and not concerned with the status quo. Although clear legal systems are in place to address women's participation in policy making, the implementation of this policy is disrupted by gender discrimination in all sectors.

In Kenya the number of women in politics is low due to lack of affirmative action laws and gender insensitive male political culture. According to Kamau (2010) some of the obstacles still hindering the advancement of women in political leadership are related to persistent poverty, lack of equal access to health, education, training and employment; cultural barriers, political structures and institutions that discriminate against women. Kamau believes that some women in political positions face a lot of stigma from men, who ridicule and undermine them at the slightest mistake they may make. Consequently their time is spent trying to attain certain standard recognizable by the men.

According to Agbalajobi (2010) the factors responsible for low participation of women in Nigerian politics include gender role, patriarchy, virility deficiency, women's conception of politics, lack of economic incentives, discriminatory customs and laws, lack of affirmative action, quota, religious doctrine and inadequate knowledge of rules protecting women's political rights.

Women are taught to be communal- friendly, unselfish, caring and thus lack in the qualities required for success in leadership roles (Schein, 2001; Fletcher, 2004). These feminine stereotypes can place women at vantage positions when it comes to likeability.

When women performing traditionally male roles are seen as conforming to feminine stereotypes, they tend to be liked but not respected (Rudman & Glick, 2001:744). According to Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) women can face trade-offs between competence and likability in leadership roles. They note further that while some women manage the competence-likability by playing feminine qualities in the interest of conveying competence, others attempt to take the perfect balance between them. There are some women who ignore gender norm, stereotypes and confront challenges that are associated with their decisions to enter into political leadership. Merely being a successful woman in a male domain can be regarded as a violation of gender norms warranting sanctions (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). When a woman performs extremely well in political leadership she is sometimes seen as being outward and ambitious. She may encounter opposition to the extent that if she is not strong willed she may give up on her political career.

A study conducted by Sossou (2011) explored Ghanaian women's perception and voices about issues of gender equality in terms of exercising their political and decision-making right in connection with political participation and governance in Ghana. The study discussed the social and policy implications of the issues of gender inequality and social exclusion of women in politics. The findings revealed that despite the constitutional provision on equal rights, women face issues of gender-based power imbalance and discrimination in addition to other structural, cultural and traditional barriers and roadblocks. Sossou believes these challenges expose women and make them inferior and second-class citizens compared with their male counterparts in terms of politics. She puts emphasis on gender inequality and social exclusion of women in

politics. It also came to light that women experience inequality and discrimination in political parties and in Ghanaian society in general. They face cultural, educational and financial barriers and these affect equal participation of women in politics.

Another study conducted in Ghana by Allah- Mensah (2005) was on the role of women in politics and public life in Ghana. This study sought to look into the current trend of women's participation and positions in politics and public offices, which also entailed detailed position and contribution of women in selected political parties. The findings indicated that women in politics face financial problem, intolerance by some men as they still believe in the separation of public from the private spheres, negative, perception of some men and women about women in politics as being promiscuous.

Gyimah and Thompson (2008) wrote on the extent of women's participation in the governance process at the local level in the Nadowli District of Ghana. The study was conducted to find out the factors impinging on the level of women's participation, impact of female representatives in the District Assembly and mechanisms for ensuring their active participation. The study revealed that, despite increase in female representation in the assembly, their numbers were still very low for the period 1988 to 2006. The study also identified factors that relegate women to subordinate roles such as the social structure and interaction that are shaped by the culture.

In Ghana, the Constitution presents an equal opportunity to both men and women to participate in political leadership; yet there is some sort of discrimination between the sexes based on religion, profession and ethnic community requirements which have existed for very long time. Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from

aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world (Paxton & Hughes, 2007). Religious and traditional beliefs still present challenges to women in political leadership. Religious obligations also keep many women isolated from societal roles and politics. The religious idea that women should be submissive to their husbands as in the case of Christians, make women coil into their shelves and always look up to their husbands in decisions concerning issues ranging from their political ambition to their own personal lives. Religion may interset with cultural prohibitions on women's political activity, forbidding women from speaking in public, seeking political office, or attending political meetings (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, Tripp, 2001).

Religion sometimes becomes a stumbling block in the way of women's political career. As observed by Emmet (2001), all mainstream religions have stereotypical roles for men and women where women are perceived as unequal to men. In her discussion of women's experience of religion, Emmet (2001) analysed the rituals performed for and by men in various religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Traditional religions and found out that men are generally valued and empowered by religion in many ways. Women on the other hand do not enjoy such a privilege; being disempowered by religious structures and practices.

Supporting this, Logwe and Clark (1999) believes some religious groups such as Islam, Christianity and many others whole-heartedly believe in patriarchy which makes women subordinate and submissive to men. These patriarchal politics ensure that the man is the "natural" head of the household, and that their decision making role naturally extends to the public domain. They therefore occupy most of the leadership positions in institutions in all walks of life.

An examination of the various denominations within Christianity reveals some patterns. While the Protestants are somehow moderate when it comes to women and leadership, the Catholics and Orthodox Christians are strict and do not accept women to lead their congregation. Protestantism promotes nonhierarchical religious practices and more readily accepts women as religious leaders compared with Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity (e.g., Greek Orthodox or Russian Orthodox).

Similarly, Islamic law is typically interpreted in a manner that constrains the activities of women (Meyer, Rizzo & Ali, 1998). Researchers have demonstrated that countries with large numbers of Protestant adherents are more supportive of female legislators than countries with large numbers of Catholics, Orthodox Christians, or Muslims (Paxton 1997, Kenworthy & Malami 1999, Paxton & Kunovich 2003). Despite these, the use of humanizing values and virtues of religion such as hardworking, humility, tolerance, discipline, equality, nondiscrimination as avenues for women empowerment cannot be over emphasized.

According to Agbalajobi (2010) persisting cultural stereotype, abuse of religious and traditional practices, patriarchal societal structures in which economic, political and social power are dominated by men and the role women have historically played as the followers of male political leaders have made women subjected to domination by men. The Ghana Statistical Services, in their population Data Analysis Reports for 2005 stated male – dominance as a key aspect of the Ghanaian social system and women’s role and status as recognizably inferior to those of men in almost all aspects of social, political and economic life. Customs, laws and even religion have been used to rationalize and

perpetuate these differential roles to the extent that women themselves seem to have accepted and internalized them.

2.7.2 Political environment

A rapidly growing body of literature indicates that certain countries and party level variables such as the configuration of the electoral system, party ideology, gender quotas and cultural and socio economic factors all influence the variation in the share of women in national legislature (Paxton, 1997; Matland, 1998; Kennworthy & Malawi, 1999; Caul, 1999; Norris & Inglehart, 2003; Paston & Kunovich, 2003). These variables suggest that political environment is also an important indicator considering the challenges confronting women in political leadership.

According to Jalalzia and Krook (2010), power disparities across political offices can be understood as the degree to which political actors operate autonomously, are relatively secure from dismissal and are able to control or exercise authority over various realms. For positions with lower levels of autonomy, security and individual prerogatives, their institutional structure may pose fewer challenges to women coming to office. Positions with fixed term of office offer protection from removal once in office. Political leadership positions vary in terms of autonomy, security and authority. Some of the women in political leadership, especially at the party level hold relatively nominal positions only as figure heads.

The electoral system is supposed to be both men and women-friendly, to open up political opportunity for both sexes. Some women may be competent and punctual in the political party's activities yet they may not be recognized as potential candidates for the

party because there are many men who are interested in the position. Gouws (2008) argues that women have important contribution to make to political change for the benefit of women but the major stumbling blocks are lack of support from the women's party auxiliary. According to her, the gap between women leaders and women followers, dysfunctional gender machinery structures and the lack of support from the women's movement and political parties may constrain women's participation and performance in political leadership. Gouws concludes that these challenges prevent women political leaders from making the difference that they can.

A study involving all parties and candidates in the 2004 and 2006 Canadian national elections on the importance of informal factors for understanding women's political under-representation by Cheng and Tavit (2011) argue that the gender composition of party gatekeepers plays a crucial role in either encouraging or discouraging women candidates to run for office. Cheng and Tavit propose that women candidates are more likely to be nominated when the gatekeeper is a woman rather than a man. This study complements previous studies that show a positive correlation-at least under some conditions-between the share of women MPs from a given party and the presence of women in that party's executive (Caul 1999; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005) by providing more precise, individual-level evidence of the informal influence that party leaders can have on female representation. These two studies were on informal factors influencing the selection process at political party level and these can be considered as factors motivating or not motivating women in politics. To a large extent, these studies are relevant to women in politics. However, issues concerning the selection of women

into grassroots political leadership position such as the assembly which is supposed to be non-partisan may not have such informal factors encouraging or discouraging women.

Cheng and Tavits (2011) concluded men have advantage over women in political leadership because they have been doing it longer and so are able to attract sponsorship. Women have to prove that they are exceptional and outstanding before they can get the needed support. This is in support of Oquaye (2012) who believes incumbency is a factor affecting women's participation as most incumbents are men and it is often felt that it is safer to field an incumbent and win than to try someone else (female entrant) and lose.

Among men and women with similar credentials, women are still less likely to be recruited or encouraged to run or to be promoted from within the party to become candidates (Carroll, 1994; Fox & Lawless, 2004, Lawless & Fox, 2005). "To make it through the primary process, women must be stronger candidates who are willing to endure greater challenges and more challengers, than their male counterparts face. Women in order words, have to be "better" than men in order to fare equally well" (Lawless & Pearson, 2008:78). It is in similar vein that Trimble and Arscott (2003) argue that in Canada, the failure of political parties to adequately support and promote female candidates and the generally masculine political environment are at least partially responsible for the underrepresentation of women in politics.

Women who aspire for political leadership and those who are already in such positions are expected to obtain the same level of cooperation from the members of their political parties but this may not be the case. Cheng and Tavits (2011) are of the opinion that women candidates are more likely to be nominated when the gatekeeper – the local party president- is a woman rather than a man. Their study shows a positive correlation

between the share of women members of parliament from a given party and the presence of women in that party's executive by providing more precise individual level evidence of informal influence that party leaders can have on female representation. If the study of Cheng and Tavits is something to go by then this is a challenge because in the Central Region of Ghana there are few women who are local party presidents (gatekeepers) or executive members, the commonest position held by them is women's organizer.

Other studies affirm the presence of female candidates as crucial because women are more likely to encourage other women to become active in politics by favouring candidates with female traits or by supporting policies to increase female candidates (Caul, 1999; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). Psychological research for example shows that feminine traits are more appealing to women than men (Huddy, 1994). A survey conducted on attitudes of gatekeepers revealed that female party leaders are more women-friendly. Besides, the women who are chairpersons (gatekeepers) serve as role models to other women and they are encouraged to take up the challenge to venture into political leadership. The study of Cheng and Tavits (2011) suggests that female local party leaders may not just prefer but actually support and promote the nomination of female party candidates. They note that women gatekeepers, apart from recruitment, are expected to provide other types of support such as financial contributions, serving as a political mentorship, providing campaign advice and assistance and encouraging party members to vote for an aspiring female candidate. Contrarily, others have also raised different views as they argue that the women leaders are tied by party rules and cannot act on their preferences even if they favoured women's candidacies (Lovenduski &

Norris as cited in Cheng & Tavits, 2011). Tremblay and Pelletier's (2001) study found no evidence that female party leaders are more women-friendly.

Leya (2010) believes the political playing field in Indonesia is still uneven and not conducive to women's participation. Leya indicates that there are structural barriers in terms of party regulations, patriarchal values, inadequate incentives, unfavourable electoral system, inadequate education and training system on leadership, poverty and unemployment, lack of adequate financial resources, multiple burdens of women and lack of confidence. Laya further noted, gendered traditional beliefs and ideology, the beliefs about politics being 'dirty', the negative pictures of women by the media, women hesitance toward corruption and money politics, lack of party supports, as well as masculine standards in politics do not favour women.

Lovenduski (1995) developed a multi-dimensional model of comparative practical process which he used to examine the interactions of gender, race and class in recruitment to the British House of Commons in the 1990s. Lovenduski identified three levels at which constraints or barriers to women may operate. These levels are systematic, party political, and individuals. At the systematic level, constraints are located in the legal, the electoral and party systems and the general structure of political opportunities. Party political factors relate to party organization, recruitment practices, party rules ideology and traditions. Individual factors relate to individual resources, motivations, aspirations and the attitudes and practices of the selectors or gatekeepers. According to Lovenduski, the individual resources and motivations of aspirations are the supply-side factor while attitudes and practices of the selectors such as gatekeepers, voters, and electoral colleges represent the demand-side factors. Throwing more light on

the demand and supply side, Mackay (2010), have noted that, the supply side relates to the availability of eligible and aspirant women and the demand side relates to their recruitment. On the demand side is placed the electorates, those within political powers who are empowered to choose candidates.

A study by Allah-Mensah (2005) into the current trend of women's participation and positions in politics and public offices in Ghana revealed that the leadership structure and internal organization of political parties do not show any commitment to gender issues in terms of women's inclusion. It also emerged that although the number of women in local government level is increasing steadily, when it comes to legislative position there has not been much significant change since 1996. She argues that there is a subtle discrimination in the context of competence politics in all political parties.

Tsikata (2011) maintains that women are put off by party practices that do not take their gender roles into consideration such as meeting times at nights or evenings when they have to care for their children, impromptu and informal meetings of "the boys" where the big decisions are taken, etc. Tsikata opposes the idea that women are not interested in politics and states,

What they cannot cope with is the double standards – one morality for women and another for men; sexual harassment from potential financiers which means that women in politics are assumed to be engaged in an endless orgy of exchanging sexual favours for money and influence, unsupportive behaviour from male party colleagues many of whom cannot cope with confident and knowledgeable women and feel diminished should they be defeated by a woman in competition for any post in the party (p. 270).

2.7.3 Home/ Family

Women are expected to perform household chores such as cooking, cleaning the house, washing, fetching of water and caring for children. In the Ghanaian set up, these are the traditional roles of women and women spend so many hours performing such jobs. The performance of these domestic roles may also keep most women isolated from the formal labour market. According to Kwabong (2009), the performance of these unpaid jobs is necessary for the functioning of the society. However, these jobs are not adequately rewarded, hence most women are not financially equipped to venture into politics which is a capital-intensive endeavour. Bari (2005:5) states “Politics is increasingly becoming commercialized. More and more money is needed to participate in politics. Women lack access to and ownership of productive resources, limiting the scope of their political work”.

In Ghana, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (2000) about 85.5 per cent of economically active women are employed in the informal sector. Such women are into commercial activities such as trading which sometimes does not yield good profit. This in a way affect women’s access and control over money and this may affect their decision to enter into political leadership.

Performance of domestic roles may also limit their interest and active involvement in politics. When women spend most of their time with family members, especially children, aged and sick people in need of care, who often hardly have knowledge or interest about politics, they lack scope to discuss political affairs with people either outside or inside the home, and also lack the freedom to gain politically relevant experience (Zaman, 2012).

According to Zaman, it is commonly believed that women are not politically socialised from childhood and that politics is male-dominated to the extent that women would only get the slightest chance to participate. He found from his study in Bangladesh that whenever female commissioners stood up to speak, they were subjected to laughter and ridicule by male commissioners. Male commissioners always obstructed women from participating in discussions, lest these women get all the funds for the major problems of their locality identified in those meetings (Zaman, 2012). A similar view was shared by Allah-Mensah (2005) that women receive very little support from the men who sometimes call them names when they endeavour to state their position or views on issues of national or party significance and interest.

Ferguson and Katundu (1994) in their study in Zambia investigated a number of negative reports about women who dared to venture into politics. It came out that some women were threatened with divorce while others were forbidden by their husbands to enter into politics and while in parliament women were not properly accepted or taken seriously.

Concerning the opportunities women get based on their family ties, research by Ross-Sheiff (2009) confirmed the notion that family ties with male political leaders correlate with women gaining political leadership positions. According to Ross-Sheiff (2009), family ties with popular male presidents or prime ministers have been a major correlate of women gaining the highest position, especially in Asia. Several women have achieved the highest positions in their countries, even in conservative countries where women's rights are restricted (Ross-Sheriff, 2009). Women leaders in South Asia such as Sirimavo Bandaranike and Chandrika Koumaratunga of Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi of

India, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, and Hasina Wajed and Khaleda zia of Bangladesh, had blood relationships or marital ties with prominent male leaders. This indicates the importance of kinship in achieving high status. In a similar vein Presidents Isabel Peron of Argentina, Janet Rosenberg Jagan of Guyana, Megawati Sukam Oputir of Indonnesia, Violeta Chamorro of Nicaragua, Corazon Aquino and Maria Gloria Macapagal Arroya of the Philippines had husbands or fathers who had been presidents or prime ministers. Despite the fact that family net-works had helped some women to occupy high political positions, their number has been few.

There are substantial international progress and development efforts toward the advancement of women in all societies; a large number of women in developing countries, including Ghana, continue to be victims of gender inequality and marginalization (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, as cited in Sossou, 2011) especially when it comes to political leadership. The women in political leadership have to deal with socio-economic, cultural, political identities and loyalties to their families, religious beliefs, profession, ethnic communities, political parties and other allegiances. Combining their roles with these allegiances can be challenging. The ability of the women in political leadership to deal with these identities and loyalties in male dominated political arena poses a major challenge to them.

2.7.4 Personal factors

Historically, beliefs that women did not have the temperament or capability to participate in politics, or that women belong in the private sphere, were codified in

political thought (Coole 1988, Pateman 1989). Consequently, some people view women as more emotional than men hence, their inability to perform leadership roles effectively. According to Gouws (2008), a 2007 survey by Commission on Gender Equality in South Africa found that more than 30 percent of the respondents were of the view that women are too emotional to handle high-level leadership positions. This may be a stereotype having its root in cultural beliefs and practices that stipulates that women are weak and dependent on men. Gouws further stated that female political leaders not only had to deal with these stereotypical ideas about themselves but also with the public and visible political incidents that undermine women's authority and feminist agenda in government. These stereotypes are personal characteristics associated with women by the society to limit them from exhibiting their leadership potentials in the public domain. There are many women in political leadership in Ghana who perform their duties very well to the admiration of many without exhibiting such perceptions in the performance of their responsibilities as leaders.

There are double standards set for women in terms of how they should behave especially if they are leaders. These are based on people's perceptions that informed them to think that women in positions of authority are too aggressive or not aggressive enough, and what appears assertive, self-confident, or entrepreneurial in a man often looks abrasive, arrogant, or self-promoting in a woman (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007). Similarly, women are judged too soft, emotional, and unassertive to make tough decision whilst others think one can come across them as sufficiently authoritative (Eagly & Carly, 2007). These views indicate that there are double standards set for women leaders. Some People expect them to exhibit feminine characteristics such as emotional,

unassertive whilst others expect them to be too assertive, confident and self promoting. According to Tsikata (2009), double standards of morality disadvantaged women who do not conform stereotypes of ideal female behaviour.

Another factor that can pose challenges to women's participation in political leadership is their unequal educational status like their male counterparts. A study conducted in Bangladesh on women's political empowerment in urban local governance revealed that women in Bangladesh were lagging behind men in all stages of education and that the unequal educational status was contributing negatively to women's involvement in politics (Zaman, 2012). Zaman noted further that women often had a fear of not being able to perform all the activities necessary in politics due to their inferior educational status. Low educational status also affects the confidence level of women and denies them access to information from the media which is an important asset for political discourse. In Ghana, women also lag behind men in all stages of education. For instance, the 2010 Population and Housing Census shows an illiteracy rates of 34.7% for females aged 15 years and above whilst that of males of that same age group stands at 21.7% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Despite this, Allah-Mensah's (2005) study revealed that the solution to the problems experienced by women in politics is in education, a development tool for women to equip them for political positions. If women are present in the party elite, they may advocate a greater number of female candidates or may better support female candidates in their bid for public office (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). Female party elites may try to support female candidates in elections by influencing list placement or party contributions to candidate selection.

Comparative studies of established democracies have long emphasized the importance of the pool of women in the professional, administrative, and managerial occupations that typically lead to political careers. Jobs in such fields as law and journalism commonly provide the flexibility, financial resources, experience, and social networks that facilitate running for elected office (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). Across countries, however, there has been little evidence to support the argument that the percentage of women in education is a predictor of parliamentary representation (e.g., Paxton, 1997; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999).

Similarly, Tsikata (2011) believes that even though education is important, it has never been a bar to men enjoying high office and influence so it should not also be a barrier for women. Citing examples, Tsikata (2011) argues that in 1996 the NPP Northern Regional Chairperson was someone who had never been to school. She explained that there have been examples of women in Ghanaian politics since the anti-colonial struggle who have used a little education to go very far. Such people have demonstrated that while education is good and useful, the lack of it is not a bar to impressive performance in high office.

The Combined Research Report on *Women of African Leadership Development Programme for Kenya, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire* in 2008, identified women's role, education, young parenthood, self-confidence, personal finances, competition, instead of cooperation, decision-making and media attention, connection, migration, employment and corruption, as the main barriers for the inclusion, advancement and continuation of women's participation in democracy.

Considering social and economic condition, earlier research found out that women's overall levels of education and labour force participation were closely related with levels of female parliamentary representation (MC Donagh, 2002). Higher socioeconomic status was identified as a potential factor for elective office. A study by Allah-Mensah (2005) revealed that financial problem was the most challenging for women aspirants. Contrary to these findings, other works have discovered weak and negative correlations between women's education and labour force participation and proportion of women in elective office (Matland, 1998; Moore & Shackman, 1996). They believe improvement in the status of women only facilitates conditions for their election. Other findings indicate that the level of education and quality of occupation operate differently depending on the level of a country's development. As they are important determinant in developing countries they cannot function effectively to determine the position of women in developed countries (Matland, 1998). In Ghana most females are found in low paying occupation and have low educational background.

A person may take action to access political leadership position and such action can be affirmed or disaffirmed. Receiving affirmation boosts self-confidence which increases one's motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). However, failing to receive validation for one's leadership attempts diminishes self-confidence as well as the motivation to seek developmental opportunities experiment and take on new leadership roles (Day, et al., 2009). Leaders who are driven by fears and insecurities inspire the same in others (Bennis, as cited in Ely, Ibarra & Klob, 2011). The social structure and interaction are shaped by the culture. Women are thought to be

communal-friendly, unselfish care-taking and thus lack in the qualities required for success in leadership roles (Schein, 2001; Fletcher, 2004).

This study explores whether personal factors pose a challenge to women in political leadership in the Central Region of Ghana and how such conditions, if they exist, affect them in political leadership position.

2.8 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of women's participation in political leadership and challenges they face in such positions. Leadership can be perceived in three perspectives. These perspectives include emphasis on qualities inherent in a leader, the situations leadership is exercised and interpersonal process.

Issues on gender in politics is broad, involving gender inequality in politics, gender differences in political knowledge, expectation of leadership as male dominated area, discrimination against women, discouragement, stereotypical ideas on the sexes, approaches used for inclusion of women in politics, double standards and gender determining peripheral positions for women. Men and women are interested in different issues especially when it comes to parliamentary deliberations. While men's attention in Parliamentary deliberations is shared among several issues, women tend to deal with only a limited number of well-defined themes such as social welfare, health care, education and employment.

Also, international organizations actively shape the behaviour of nation-states. The United Nations, African Union, Commonwealth of Nations are examples of such groups. The United Nations established the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 1946. In

1952, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. There have been other efforts put in place at the international level to ensure gender equality.

However, a combination of cultural, social, economic and political factors serve as challenges militating against women's inclusion in political leadership. Women's persistent under-representation in leadership positions have been on forms of gender bias which is often the invisible barriers to women's advancement that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, work place structures, practices and patterns of interaction that favour men. Pervasive influence of traditional social attitudes and customs deeply rooted in patriarchal system limit women's interest and active involvement in politics. It could be realized that these factors pose challenges to women's participation and advancement in political leadership.

Despite these challenges, much has not been done in establishing the effects of these challenges on the women and how they deal with them. Also, there is lack of comprehensive effort so far to exploring motivation and mentorship of women to compensate for gender inequality in political leadership. The most appropriate means of determining how these challenges actually affect their performance as political leaders is to enquire from them. The next chapter indicates how data was collected for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methods, techniques and the procedures adopted by the researcher for the study. The issues to be considered are the research design, description of the study area, population, the sample and sampling techniques, the instruments used for data collection, data collection and analysis procedures, as well as validity and reliability of instruments.

3.1 Research Design

Considering the perspectives and the objective of this research, which are to explore the challenges of women in political leadership in Central Region and how they deal with these challenges, the researcher used the qualitative research model. Qualitative model provides detailed information about phenomena. It can also be used to gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information (Hoepfl, 1997). According to Alhassan (2012) the primary aim of qualitative research is to provide a complete, detailed description of the subject of the study with the purpose of uncovering prevalent trends and patterns in thought and in opinion. Baumgartner, Strong and Hensley (2002) also note that qualitative research methods generate richly detailed data about the group or individual being studied and provide contextual understanding. Considering that the research focused on how women in political leadership make meaning out of their experiences the design allowed the

researcher to gain some insights into their attitudes, behaviours, value systems, motivations, aspirations, concerns, culture and lifestyles in an in-depth way.

A case study design was adopted in carrying out the research. Case studies strive to portray what it is to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up realities and thick descriptions of participants (Cohen, Nelson & Walsh, 2002) with the focus on a single social group, entity or phenomena and its characteristics (Kwabia, 2006). According to Merriam (2001) it is different from other types of qualitative research in that it leads to intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, a programme, event, group, intervention or community. The qualitative nature of case study, the need to gain in-depth understanding and the focus on single group who are women in political leadership make it appropriate for this study.

3.2 Description of the Study area

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2010), the Central Region is about 9,826 square kilometers with twenty District Assemblies. The total population of the region was 2,201,863 comprising 1,050,112 males and 1,151,751 females (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). The Population and Housing Census Summary Report of 2010 reveals that agriculture and its related work remain the major occupation of women in these areas (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Other occupations of women in this region can be identified in education, manufacturing, wholesale and retail, and other service activities.

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the region and its district assemblies, as bounded by Western region.

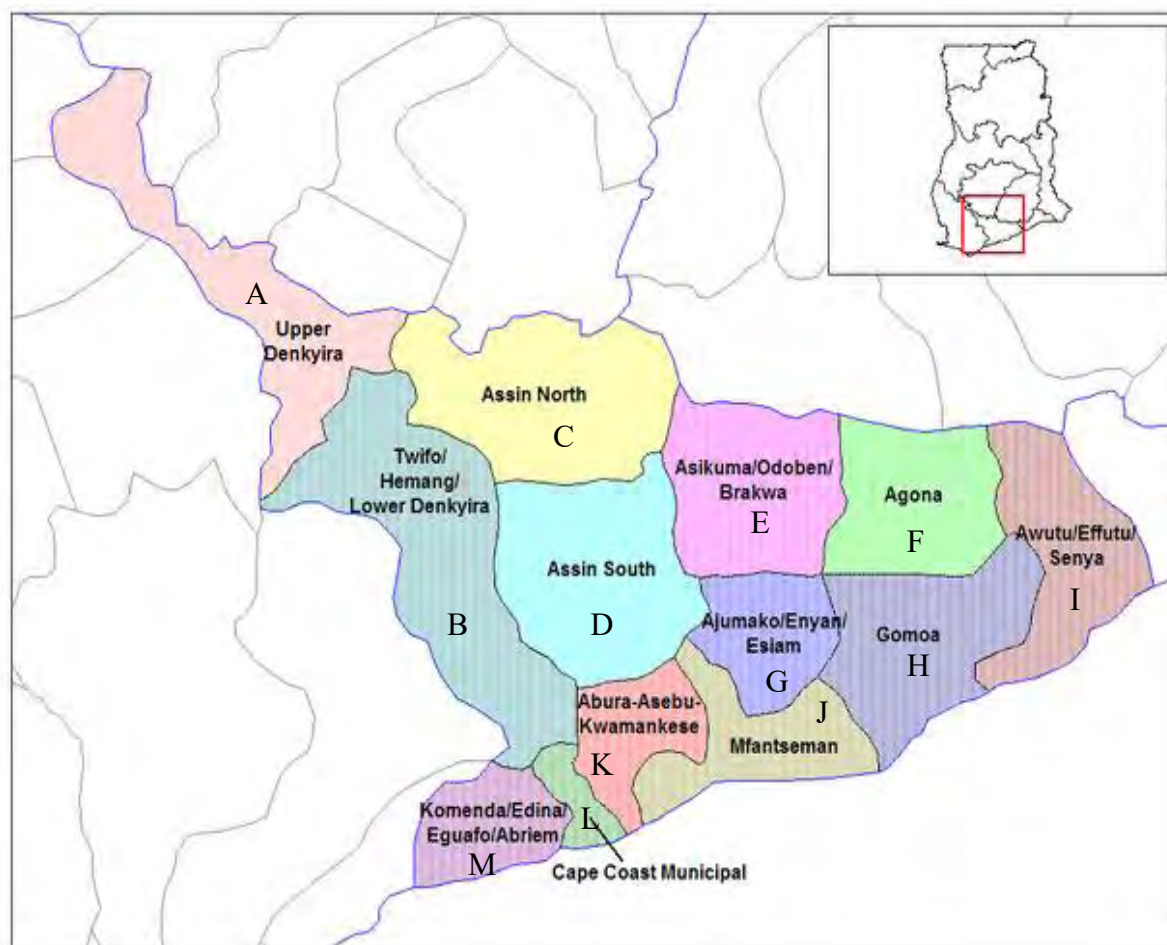


Figure 1: A political map of the Central Region of Ghana

Key:

- | | |
|--|---|
| A - Upper Denkyira East
Upper Denkyire West | G - Ajumako/Enyan/Esiam |
| B - Twifo Atti Morkwa, Hemang Lower
Denkyira | H - Gomoa West, Gomoa East |
| C - Assin North | I - Ewutu, Ewutu Senya East, Ewutu
Senya West |
| D - Assin South | J - Mfantseman, Ekumfi |
| E - Asikuma/ Odoben/Brakwa | K -Abura/Asebu/Kwamankese |
| F - Agona East, Agona West | L - Cape Coast |
| | M -Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abrem |

3.3 Population

The target population for this study comprised all the women who occupy non-traditional political leadership positions in the Central Region. The accessible population however, was women in political leadership in four districts that were purposively selected for the study because all the districts except Effutu have female members of Parliament.

3.4 Selecting the Participants

The researcher employed a number of techniques, primarily purposive and incidental sampling, to achieve the required number of participants. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select the primary participants who were the women occupying political leadership positions such as assembly women, political party executives, District Chief Executives, and Members of Parliament. According to Merriam (2001) the criteria you establish for purposive sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information.

In addition incidental sampling was used to select ten elected assembly women, seven political party executive members at the constituency level, two Members of Parliament and one former District Chief Executive from the four districts for the study. The researcher visited the various political parties' offices asking for the contact numbers and locations of the women in executive positions. Through regular calls and visits the researcher got seven of these women in the four districts to be interviewed. The researcher obtained the numbers of the former District Chief Executive from an assembly man and that of the women members of parliament from male party executives in their

districts. Several calls and visits were made until the researcher was able to get the former District Chief Executive and two of the women members of parliament.

The researcher visited each of the districts assembly offices asking for the names and mobile numbers of the elected assembly women. The researcher called the women who were willing and ready to take part in the study and follow up visits were made until the number needed for the study was achieved. Ten elected assembly men from two of the districts- Ewutu Senya and Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa who were willing to participate in the study were also contacted through their mobile numbers and visits to schedule focus group discussion sessions with six of the assembly women interviewed to deliberate on the issues that were raised through the interview sessions. In all, there were 30 participants for the study. Table 3.1 provides the details.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Participants

3.1a Gender of Participants		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Female	20	67
Male	10	33
Total	30	100
3.1b District of Participants		
District	Frequency	Percentage %
Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa	11	37
Effutu	4	13
Awutu Senya	12	40
Agona East	3	10
Total	30	100
3.1c Position held by Participants		
Position	Frequency	Percentage %
Member of Parliament	2	7
Former District Chief Executive	1	3
Assembly men and women	20	67
Political Party Executives	7	23
Total	30	100

3.5 Data Collection

The researcher used both the primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from the information provided by the participants. Secondary data were obtained from journals, books and articles of renowned authors on various issues. In order to obtain relevant data, instruments such as interview guide, focus group discussion guide and observation checklist were employed. A questionnaire was also used to gather data on participants' background information.

3.5.1 Interview

The interviews were face-to-face, conducted by the researcher, and lasted between one hour and one hour thirty minutes for each participant. According to Have (2004), interview methods are based upon the assumptions that societal processes and social actions can be understood from the vantage point of the voices of individuals living those experiences. The importance of interview as data gathering instrument cannot be over-emphasized. One cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions of someone. One cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. One cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. According to Merriam (2001) the purpose of interviewing is to allow one to enter into the other person's perspective.

In this respect a semi-structured interview guide comprising 32 items (see Appendix A) was adopted. There were exploratory and open ended questions on leadership and challenges facing women in political leadership. As part of the research programme there were familiarization sessions with the participants during which they were briefed.

The field work started in April 2013 and ended in February 2014. Considering the work of the respondents and the busy schedule of some of them it became clear that the researcher could not follow any systematic procedure to get the respondents so she went round scheduling interview appointments. Those who could not honour the appointments but were willing to take part had their interview rescheduled for them. The participants were variously interviewed at home, work places, the urban centre and at restaurant. Face- to-face interviews were conducted with twenty respondents. All the party executive members and nine of the assembly women spoke Fante because they said they were more comfortable speaking Fante than English. One Assembly woman, the former District Chief Executive and the Members of Parliament spoke in English. All the interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy. The researcher also took notes on the issues that cropped up.

The researcher followed the semi-structured interview guide containing 32 items (Appendix A) systematically in order to ensure that almost all the questions were answered by each of the 20 respondents. The researcher probed further on some of the issues raised by the answers the respondents gave. This aroused the interest of some of the respondents and they really opened up to come out with very interesting issues that were of importance to the researcher.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Two such sessions were organised for the ten assembly men and six of the assembly women interviewed based on the FGD interview guide (see Appendix B). Each session had five assembly men and three women and lasted for about two hours. A facilitation guide that contained the issues that the women raised in the face to face interview was used for the discussions. The researcher moderated the sessions for the discussions thus enabling her to interact with and ask probing questions to clarify some issues. The researcher also got information on their approval of financial problems facing all of them while the women especially mentioned, insult, sabotage and issues concerning child bearing and caring. Non-verbal responses, such as facial expressions, nodding of heads and other body language were also given by the participants to put emphasis on some of the issues raised. This process helped the researcher to remove contradictions and confirmed some of the issues that emerged during the earlier interview. The discussion was audio-recorded and field notes on non-verbal responses, mannerisms and demeanor of participants were recorded.

3.5.3 Observation

There are two fundamental observation methods and these are participant and non-participant observations. In a non-participant way, the researcher recorded the behaviours of the participants, their activities and interactions with visitors, people they worked with as well as the participants' relationship with their superiors, who were District Chief Executives, Members of Parliament and party executives in their constituency. All this was based on the observation checklist in Appendix C. The behaviours of the participants

toward these people were therefore categorized either friendly or unfriendly and recorded anytime the researcher visited them. The condition of setting the researcher normally met the participants were also indicated using indicators such as conducive, moderate and not conducive. This enabled the researcher to gather data on the physical environment within which they operate. According to Dietsch (2003) observation enables the observer to see the subject first-hand. This enabled the researcher to compare and to verify impressions generated from visits to the study sites.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire on the background information of participants were analysed using SPSS, frequency counts and percentages. The data obtained from the focus group discussion and observation were used to cross check those obtained from the interview for consistency and accuracy. Using thematic analysis, identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour were identified.

All the transcribed information were coded to condense the data into categories. These were organized and examined to establish the linkages among concepts, themes and patterns of experiences. According to Aronson (1994) the pattern of experience comes from direct quotations and paraphrasing. The researcher combined related patterns into sub-themes to obtain a comprehensive view of the participants and supported it with excerpts of the data. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were given to all the participants.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

A key issue for qualitative research is developing a shared understanding of appropriate procedures for assessing its credibility or trustworthiness, popularly known as “validity” in a qualitative domain. According to Baumgartner, Strong and Hensley (2002) qualitative data can be evaluated in terms of its trustworthiness. The issues that were discussed were credibility, transferability, and dependability. Regarding the semi-structured interview schedule the researcher played back the recordings to respondents after the interview session to ensure that what they said had been correctly recorded. The findings from the focus group discussions were also used for verification and consistency of issues. Some of the study participants were asked to check the findings and to provide comments. This enabled the researcher to gain feedback on results from the participants to enhance credibility thereby ensuring internal validity of the data.

The researcher enhanced transferability by detailing the research methods and providing explanations of the research setting and individuals. Seal (1999) endorses the concept of dependability with the concept of consistency or reliability in qualitative research. To ensure dependability, the researcher used interview, focus group discussion and observation to check consistency of findings that were obtained.

3.8 Research Ethics

This study sought permission from the respondents with a letter from the Department of Social Studies, University of Education, Winneba (Appendix H). The researcher booked appointments with the individual respondents to suit their convenience, with the privacy given priority in all dealing with them. The researcher

assured them of anonymity and confidentiality of any information that they did not want to be associated with in the public domain. The researcher used pseudonyms to present their excerpts. Based on the assurance given to the interviewees, they seemed convinced and shared their experiences with the researcher.

3.9 Summary

Chapter three provided the methods; strategies and plans that were followed for the collection of data that answered the research questions. Qualitative research methods and case study were adopted for the study. Non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive and incidental sampling were employed in selecting participants for the study. Interview, observation and focus group discussion were data collection instruments and the data were analysed through thematic procedure in line with the research questions as presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The study investigated the challenges confronting women in political leadership and how they deal with the challenges. Qualitative data was collected through face to face interviews of participants and through focus group discussions and observation whilst quantitative data was collected participants' background information using questionnaire.

The findings are presented under two sections. The first section is on the questionnaire and the second section is on the interview, focus group discussions and observation. The observation checklist centred on the research environment, both physical (office, surroundings etc) and social (interactions with superiors, subordinate and visitors) environments. The physical environment of the participants provided a basis for gauging their economic conditions. Information gathered on participants work schedules and observations of their work culture provided additional resources for a vivid interpretation and presentation of the reality.

The set of questionnaire contained items soliciting data on respondents' age, marital status, number of children, educational qualification, occupation, political leadership position and number of years in such position. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed with the aid of SPSS using tables to indicate the frequency and percentages of respondents who shared similar views.

Concerning the interview sessions, the issues raised centred on preliminary information such as when the participants' interest in politics first began, their previous leadership positions and how they got into their present leadership position. Other issues

centered on what motivated the women to be in political leadership, their perceptions on leadership positions, challenges and their management of those challenges. The focus group discussion sessions were on some of the critical issues on gender and leadership and challenges. Following the thematic procedure, data were sorted into themes, while direct quotes of interviewees were used to emphasize the emerging issues. All the participants were given pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity. The data is presented under the following themes:

- Respondents' views on when their interest in politics began and their previous leadership positions
- Motivation
- Perceptions of women political leaders on political leadership
- Financial Constraints
- Traditional and religious beliefs and perceptions
- Marriage
- Performance of gender roles
- Gender and performance of political roles
- Double Standards
- Misunderstanding in political party
- Party politics in the District Assemblies
- Other issues confronting women in political leadership
- Effects of the challenges on women in political leadership
- Dealing with the challenges
- Expectations

Findings

4.1 Background of Participants

A brief profile of the participants (women) was collected. The information sought was on age, marital status, number of children, educational qualification, political leadership position and number of years in such position. Background information was also taken on age, marital status, highest educational qualification and occupation of the ten assembly men who were involved in the focus group discussion on critical issues the women leaders raised. This is presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

Table 4.1: Profile of Female Participants

4.1a: Age of Participants

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
31 – 35 years	1	5
36 – 40 years	1	5
41 – 45 years	3	15
46 – 50 years	5	25
51 – 55 years	3	15
56 – 60 years	4	20
61 years and above	3	15
Total	20	100

4.1b. Marital Status of Participants

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	13	65
Single	4	20
Divorced	1	5
Widow	2	10
Total	20	100

4.1c. Number of Children

Number	Frequency	Percentage
1	3	15
2	3	15
3	4	20
4	5	25
5	2	10
6	2	10
7 and above	1	5
Total	20	100

4.1d. Educational Status

Level	Frequency	Percentage
No Former Education	1	5
Basic Education	11	55
Secondary Education	3	15
Tertiary Education	5	25
Total	20	100

4.1e. Occupational Status

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching	6	30
Businesswoman	12	60
Government Agency	1	5
No stated	1	5
Total	20	100

4.1f. Political Positions held

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Assembly woman	10	50
Party Executive Member	7	35
Former District Chief Executive	1	5
Member of Parliament	2	10
Total	20	100

4.1g. Years in those Positions

Years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	2	10
1 – 5 years	11	55
6 – 10 years	5	25
Above 10 years	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 4.1 generally shows the background information of female political leaders in Central Region who were involved in the study. Fifteen respondents (75%) were within the age range of 41-60 years whilst 3 (15%) were over 60 years. They were therefore relatively matured enough to appropriately deal with the challenges of leadership. Besides, most of them being relatively old, they may be seen as epitome of knowledge. Two respondents (10%) were aged between 31 and 40 years. Thirteen of the respondents were married whilst four (4) respondents were single. There were two (2) widows and 1 divorcee. Apparently all the participants had some parental responsibilities since the number of children they had ranged from 1-7. Some of the children were in their early stages of development so the participants had to combine their political ambitions with familial responsibilities. A majority of participants 11 (55%) completed basic education, thus having only the minimum national education, five (5) had tertiary education thus placing them at a comparative advantage over their less educated counterparts. For those with only basic education, access to information is limited in a way as they lack basic skills in knowledge acquisition. Some of them also lack confidence in themselves because of their low level of education. Eleven participants (55%) had been in their political positions from 1 to 5 years, 5 (25%) from 6-10 years, whilst 2 (10%) had been political leaders for over a decade.

Regarding their professions and occupations, only one person chose not to disclose what she did for a living and one was working with National Health Insurance. The rest were either working as teachers (6) or largely as entrepreneurs (12). At the time of the study, 2 of the participants had achieved the highest level of political representation as members of the national parliament. Ten were engaged in district-level

politics as district assembly representatives (assembly women); 7 as constituency executive members of the major political parties, while one was a former political head of the district (district chief executive).

The other batch of participants was assembly men whose profile is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Profile of Assembly men

4.2a. Age		
Range	Frequency	Percentage
31 – 35	1	10
36 – 40	1	10
41 – 45	4	40
46 – 50	1	10
51 – 55	0	0
56 – 60	2	20
61 years and above	1	10
Total	10	100
4.2b. Marital Status		
Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	7	70
Single	2	20
Divorced	1	10
Total	10	100
4.2c. Educational Level		
Level	Frequency	Percentage
Basic Education	2	55
Secondary Education	1	15
Tertiary Education	7	25
Total	10	100
4.2d. Occupational Status		
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching	5	50
Businessman	2	20
Journalist	1	10
Coach	1	10
Farmer	1	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.2 shows the background information of the ten assembly men involved in the focus group discussions. Seven respondents (70%) were within the age range of 41-60 years whilst 1 (10%) was over 60 years. Two respondents (20%) were aged between 31 and 40 years. Seven of the respondents were married whilst 2 respondents were single. There was 1 divorcee. A majority of participants 7 (70%) had completed tertiary level of education, thus giving them a competitive advantage over their female colleagues. Regarding their professional occupations, there were 5 teachers, 2 entrepreneurs, 1 journalist, 1 farmer and 1 coach. Most of these participants are employed in the formal sector and have access to regular income unlike their female counterpart.

Research Question 1: What factors motivate women to aspire to political leadership?

4.2 Respondents' views on when their interest in politics began and their previous leadership positions

The interview guide had four preliminary questions on the genesis of participants' interest in politics, the pathway to their positions, the number of years in that position and any other political leadership position that they had held.

Mercy aged 65, constituency treasurer for 12 years and a petty trader entered into politics in 1969 at the time of the Progress Party but minimized her involvement because of the negative perceptions about women in politics as well as frequent military

interventions that were characteristic of Ghana's politics in the 1970s and 1980s. According to her, people generally perceived women in politics as immoral and even though she was not comfortable with that tag she came back into politics in 1992.

Interviewer: Please, tell me about when your interest in political leadership first began.

Mercy: *At first they used to organize communal labour. I was taking part in that. They started with election and I decided to be involved. That time I was in Progress Party in 1969. At the beginning if you are a woman and you go into politics they consider you as "spoilt". There were lots of rumour about the women in politics and they were branded immoral. Also there were many coups in the 1970s and 1980s so I stopped politics and came back to it in 1992.*

Jane aged 57, has been an assembly woman for 10 years and is also constituency women's organizer, entered politics in 1979 when former president J. J. Rawlings made his first coup.

Jane: *I entered politics in 1979 when former president J.J. Rawlings had his first coup.*

Kate aged 58, women's organizer for 3 years and working with the National Health Insurance shared her experience and said she started politics in 1982.

Kate: *I started politics during the time of Civic Defense Organization (CDO). It was around 1982. I was a member of the Civic Defense Organisation (CDO), joined the Committee of the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) in 1984, supported the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) and now a member of National Democratic Congress (NDC).*

Rita, shared her experience thus:

My interest in politics started when J.J. Rawlings had his first coup. The boys who were involved were my area boys. We were staying in barracks and my father was a police man. We were at Adum and any time the boys were going to Kejetia they pass through my area. My siblings were attending Garison Primary School. The boys Rawlings used for the coup de'tat were my area boys and I felt I can also get involved. (Women's Organizer, 46 years old).

Twelve participants entered politics in 1992, while Ama, a 38-year assembly woman and a constituency women's organizer, entered politics in 2006. The others started working with other organizations that provided the platform for them to enter politics. For example, Mary, aged 42, an assembly woman and professional teacher was a secretary to World Vision Projects in her community while Grace aged 47, an assembly woman, started of as a community-based health care provider. Hellen aged 48, a member of parliament, former women's organizer and professional teacher was a Ghana National Association of Teachers Ladies (GNATLAS) executive member.

Interviewer: Please, tell me about when your interest in political leadership first began.

Ama: *It was 2006 when I developed interest in politics. I was in Kasoa and used to involve myself in politics. The former MP of Weija, Honourable Shirley Ayiko Botwey in her time I joined her campaign trail and we used to move from house to house.*

Mary: *I started as a book keeper for World Vision and this made me popular and served as a bait to win the trust of the people in the community. The people encouraged me to contest for the assembly member position.*

With the exception of the former District Chief Executive who was nominated by the president after a series of interviews, the rest were all elected into those positions of political leadership. The participants explained the procedure that led to their elections in the following ways:

Kate: *Constituency women's organizer position was given to me because of my character and hard work. I was the branch chairman in my area, then I became the deputy women organizer. Through deputy women's organizer I became the constituency women's organizer. The women's organizers in all the 75 branches voted in an election conducted by the constituency and I was voted for. The Executive*

members in my party are chairperson, secretary, treasurer, organizer, youth organizer, women organizer and 3 co-opted members.

Rita: *Any positions that you admire you have to work hard for it. You have to work for what you want so I worked for it. I was elected. I picked the nomination form and we were two and I won massively. Every polling station has five executives and those people voted for me. At that time we had 71 polling stations. The five people were chairman, secretary, women's organizer, youth organizer and organizer. No deputies. We introduce deputies and communication officers. (Women's Organizer)*

With the two big political parties that we have in Ghana, each has its own way of electing constituency women's organizer. Whereas all the executive members in the various branches participate in the election of the constituency women's organizer in the NPP, the NDC limits the participation in the election to only the branch women's organizers. This in a way may isolate the women's organizers in that party, thus affecting their recognition and authority inherent in that position. The Assembly women, Members of Parliament and the former District Chief Executive also explained their ascendancy to those positions in the following ways:

Jane: *I am free with people both those at the grassroots level and others. I am humble and I also gathered courage before I was able to be in that position. I was considerate and bearing with the people and helping them. These were seen by the people in the community and they voted for me. I first collected my nomination form from the electoral commission and had to get 18 people to endorse. I had a proposal and seconder to also approve it. I campaigned telling the people what I will do if I am giving the opportunity. (57 years, assembly woman and Women's Organizer)*

Hellen a member of parliament also had this to say:

I was voted for. I went through primaries in the constituency and my party members presented me as their candidate. In 2012 general elections I was elected by God's grace. At the primary we were four, three men and I was the only female. With the general election we were five, four men and I am the only woman. (48 years old).

Monica: *I applied and was nominated to join a group of people for selection process (interview). Four of us were shortlisted to attend interview in Accra. They gave it to a man. Later I was asked by the DCE (that man) to support the assembly. I was asked to join poverty alleviation committee. In 2004 I came out to contest for the position of MP and lost. I contested in 2008 and lost that one too but because my party was in power I was nominated as DCE. I applied, shortlisted and attended interview at constituency, regional and national levels. The president appointed me and I was endorsed by the assembly members. (56 years, former DCE).*

The participants were also asked about any other political leadership position that they have held. Apparently all the party executives started as branch executives and rose to constituency women organizer and treasurer positions. The two members of parliament and the former District Chief Executive were in constituency executive positions before their current positions. The assembly women were all active in party politics with two of them (Jane and Ama) still acting as constituency women's organizers; one was a former women's organizer while seven were in leadership positions at the branch level in their parties.

Rebecca, an assembly woman and a petty trade noted: *I was the former Women organizer in 1996. In the Assembly we are not expected to be partizan so I tried to reduce my participation in the party so now I am only Assembly woman. (46 years).*

While some participants like Rebecca construe the position of district assembly member as non-partisan, others thought otherwise. Mary, an assembly woman and a professional teacher, for example noted:

I am the branch chairperson of my party and assembly woman at the moment. (42 years)

Participants who were party executives also shared their experience thus:

Rose: *I am the chairperson in my branch and a constituency treasurer. I am active in the party. (Constituency treasurer, 55 years).*

Kate: The people look at your performance in the party before they vote for you. Before becoming the women's organizer I was the ward coordinator. It was last four years that I was elected the women's organizer.

These responses gave credibility to the capabilities of these women and their ability to be in political leadership at various levels. They have been in politics rising through the various ranks such as ward coordinator, branch positions and to the constituency positions and others. This presupposes that the attainment of leadership position is a gradual and time-dependent process. It takes time to win the trust of the people especially for them being women, largely because of the perceptions that people have about women and leadership. It is also apparent that at the constituency level the executive position most women are able to achieve is constituency women's organizer. For example, there were only two women in executive positions who were constituency treasurers in the two major political parties (NDC and NPP) as opposed to several of them who were women's organizers and assembly women in the study area.

4.3 Motivation

Motivation is crucial to the participants' decisions on political leadership. For this reason, a number of reasons were given. Some participants considered their engagement in leadership roles as a calling. Such women were self motivated. Others noted that they were encouraged by some people to engage in such roles whilst others noted that even though they had personal conviction, they had to be motivated by others before they had the courage and conviction to enter politics and to seek leadership roles.

4.3.1 Self motivation

Few participants came out that they had personal conviction to lead the people and this materialized because of their personal interest in politics and their desire to help humanity. When asked what motivated her to engage herself this way, a 52-year-old Esi, an assembly woman and a teacher noted:

I had the conviction that I can help my people through politics.

A similar view was raised by Rita:

I had interest in politics. I had inward desire to go into politics. (Women's Organizer)

Others were of the view that things were not going on well and felt they could help because some of them felt they are well educated and good at creating good human relations and lobbying for things in their communities, hence they were properly positioned to enter politics as well as seek leadership roles.

Interviewer: What factors motivated you to opt for political leadership?

Ama: I cannot sit down for things to spoil. I had the conviction that I should join. If there is any confusion between two people I am able to settle. I am gifted and can talk to calm people. I can also lobby to bring things to my community. (Assembly woman and a constituency women's organizer, 38 years)

Some of the women indicated that although the desire is there, they thought of what they will be able to do or get when they are elected or selected for those political leadership positions. They saw the power inherent in those positions as well as opportunities such as scholarship and sponsorships that would be available to them.

Rebecca: *I thought being an assembly woman I will get somebody to help me further my education but I had no one to help.*

Kate: *Some women enter politics so that they can get scholarship or contact for help. This year we have got many women whose children completed good schools and had good grades because they are in politics.*

According to Doreen: *I realized that whenever you have the interest to serve your people you actually need a stronger force or power behind you to help you do that so through such positions I will be able to get stronger force or power. In my own capacity I cannot do much but with the political leadership position I have the power. I can do a lot to support my community. With the political power I realized that considering the needs assessment of my community I could do a lot and I think I am able to do that. (Member of Parliament, 49 years old).*

4.3.2 Motivation by others

It also came out that some of the women were either directly or indirectly motivated by others to venture into political leadership. Such persons include the late Hawa Yakubu; former Member of Parliament for Bawku Central Constituency, and the late Theresa Amerley Tagoe, former Member of Parliament for Ablekuma South Constituency, Madam Ama Benyiwa Doe, former Central Regional Minister and current Council of State member, Madam Hannah Serwaa Tetteh, Member of Parliament for Ewutu-Senya West Constituency, former Minister of Trade and Industry, and current Foreign Minister. Not only were they impressed with their political achievements they were also in some cases personally mentored by some of those seasoned politicians.

Rita: *I was motivated by the late Theresa Amerley Tagoe and Hawa Yakubu. I was in Dansoman and I looked up to them to go into politics. The late Theresa Amerley Tagoe selected those of us who are courageous and know our rights. She saw in us that we can do it and she motivated us. She*

encouraged us to attend meetings and sometimes they gave us transport at other times too nothing. She advised us and sent us to places to attend seminars. Hawa was informing us anytime she attends meetings what she went there to fight for. She was always encouraging us.

Hellen: When I came into politics I met Auntie Frema. Auntie Frema was then the MP for Ayewaso Wagon and is now home. She left parliament in 2012. She decided not to contest again. She was once a Minister and a leading member of the party especially when it comes to women's issues. She advised me and gave me financial support. She is like a mother to me. Whenever I need advice I go to her. She encouraged me on what to do especially when I was going in for women organizer position. She actually told me that she could see that I am a potential MP for the area but I should start from women organizer. So I contested for the position and I won. She helped me physically, financially and spiritually.

Amina: My political mentor is Ama Benyiwa Doe. I looked at the way she is forceful but my educational level is not high enough to be like her but I encourage those in the party with high educational background to go high. Ama Benyiwa Doe has been talking to us when we attend meetings. She talks to us to be truthful and love one another. She has been effective and invites us from time to time. (Assembly woman and petty trader, 44 years old)

Mary : I look up to my MP- Hannah Tetteh. The way she is composed and takes care of issues. When she comes to the television to address issues the way she carries herself is good. She is intelligent, well composed and talk very well. She handles difficult situations with ease as if there are no problems. (Assembly woman and a professional teacher, 42 years old)

These people are political leaders who have made it and are always remembered in Ghanaian politics. The participants noted that some of them were still offering them advice in times of need and crisis. In addition, some of the participants were motivated by family members to enter into politics. Such people were fathers, husbands, sisters and other relatives who had been in active politics before. For instance, in response to the question “what factors motivated you to opt for political leadership?” Monica and Rose provided the following insight.

Monica: *I didn't harbour the ambition of becoming a political leader. I was encouraged by some people in political leadership in 1998. The DCE who was a woman had been removed by then and they needed a replacement from the district. At that time my father was the vice chairman of the political party in the district. My father had to encourage me and after a careful deliberation I took up the challenge. (56 years, former DCE).*

Rose stated: *I went into political leadership because of my husband. My husband was the party vice chairman of the constituency. As a woman wherever your husband is, you should follow him so I had to join him to make sure the party goes forward. Although he has passed on I am now the constituency treasurer. (Constituency treasurer, 55 years).*

There were some of these women who had the desire to enter into political leadership but others had to motivate them for their dreams to come through.

Grace: *The people encouraged me to contest for the assembly woman position even though I also see it as divine calling and a personal conviction that motivated me to go into politics. Some people encouraged me because of my confidence level. I also listened to the people, their needs and felt I could help if I am voted into power. (Assembly woman, a former community based health provider but currently a business woman, 47 years)*

Amina: *If you have interest or slightest interest when people encourage you to go into politics you will do that. I had the interest else I wouldn't have accepted the offer.*

4.4 Primary motivators

The participants were asked of what they considered to be the primary motivators for women in political leadership. Most of them were of the opinion that having some formal education and qualities such as intelligence, confidence, humility, tolerance, discipline, sympathetic, understanding, trustworthy and passion to help people, serve as primary motivators. These personal qualities were identified by the participants as primary motivators because they are linked to their personality traits and are priorities in

terms of leadership qualities. They acknowledged that high educational background is a necessity for those who aspired to higher political leadership positions.

Interviewer: What do you think are the primary motivators for women including yourself to seek political leadership positions?

Hellen: *Being well educated and intelligent encouraged some women to go into politics. Formal education helps women to have confidence in themselves. While in school some females also have the opportunity to be leaders such as class prefect, section leaders and others in the school and that experience serves as primary motivator to them.*

Rebecca: *A woman's educational level sometimes serves as primary motivator for some political leadership positions. If your educational level is high you can contest for higher positions such as Member of Parliament, regional women organizer.*

Doreen: *Some qualities serve as primary motivators and if a woman has those qualities she is not afraid to take up leadership. Such qualities are intelligence, confidence, passionate to help people and tolerance.*

Esi: *By the nature of women they are kind, have passion and are tolerant on the average and these are some of the qualities women have and these help them to venture into political leadership.*

Ama: *Women want to be praised and always perform their duties well. They do not want to do anything that will enable people to tag them with bad name that may affect their children and unborn generation and so if they know they can do the work well then they take the challenge being a political leader.*

The women were of the view that these primary motivators may be affected by the feedback that will be given by the people around them such as family member, friends and political party members especially the executives. But if the feedback is negative and the woman is firm she could face that challenge.

Monica sharing her experience stated: *In 2008 for instance, I was going through crisis during the primaries because the men were domineering and ganged up against me. Honourable Ama Benyiwa Doe was always encouraging me to be strong. Sometimes, I had to go and face the executives. She was encouraging me to be strong and at the end of the day things became better.*

Emelia corroborated: *I faced strong opposition from the party chairman when I decided to contest in the assembly elections. I did not know what I had done to him. It was another executive member who stood by me and encouraged me to ignore him and I was able to win the election and I am now the assembly woman. (Assembly woman, 51 years)*

Research Question 2: How do such leaders perceive leadership?

4.5 Perceptions of political leadership

The participants perceived political leadership as influencing and organising the people to achieve one's vision or the target set. They believed political leadership enables one to get power to undertake projects and to bring development to the people.

Interviewer: What do you understand by political leadership?

Ama: *Political leadership involves having a vision and interacting with the people, educating them to achieve the vision.*

Mary: *Political leadership involves organizing the people and working hard to help them in your community.*

Rita: *Political leadership involves setting targets and organizing the people to help in your country's development without considering what people will say to detract your attention. You have to be focused. You have to consult other people who are grown up and experience on issues.*

Kate: *Political leadership enables one to work well for the development of the party and the people in the society. Women are focused and want to get the position to work very well.*

Doreen: *Leadership is obtaining power to undertake projects. For instance there was a school which is a Kindergarten in this area where the children were sitting on the floor to learn but with my political power I was able to penetrate and go and lobby for them to get modern facilities befitting the school. Had it not been my political position I would not have been able to help. With the political power you can lobby to do so many things for the people you intend to serve. If I had no*

political power I would have gone there to brood without being able to build the modern KG if I do not have personal money for that. So with the political power one is able to do a lot to help the people. Political leadership gives me respect, power and recognition in the society.

Some of the participants believed that since they are political leaders they have got the power to control the behaviour of their followers. This perception of leadership may pose a challenge to the women leaders as some of the followers may not comply with their decisions as they are women.

In answering the question on who is expected to be in a political leadership position, the participants agreed to the fact that both men and women can take up political leadership roles. Others went further to talk about the personal qualities that a leader should exhibit.

Interviewer: Who may be a political leader?

Rebecca: *Both men and women can be political leaders.*

Mary: *Women can also be leaders. We can consider Hannah Tetteh, she is doing very well. Some women can be good leaders.*

Esi: *Political leadership is a venture for someone who is intelligent and matured and can work for the good of the people. The person should be God fearing, a person who likes sharing and understands people. Someone who is just, hardworking, and see to the good of people can be in political leadership position.*

Grace: *Anybody who is God fearing, honest, transparent and can tell what he/she has received from the well wishers and big men in the party can be a leader. If people say that they are Christian and will not go into politics, it pains me. If Christians do not go into politics things will go out of hand. If the person*

is God fearing, everything that he/she will do he/she will consider what the Bible say about the issue and act.

Ama: If you have the talent, the gift of leading the people you can enter into politics.

Despite these answers, some of the women were of the view that no specific criteria can determine who should be in political leadership. They believe it depends on the interest of the person concerned. They did not believe that personal qualities should be used to determine who should be in political leadership position.

Expressing her views Hellen stated: *I don't believe we should have specific criteria but if you have the interest of helping the needy, interest of bringing development you can enter into political leadership. Some people also say education but I don't believe in that because when you get to parliament they ask you the language you will like to speak. If it is the local language you will be allowed to do so.*

Some of the participants were also of the view that although men and women can be in political leadership positions, women can function better in some positions than men.

One of such people, Rose said,

Women can perform leadership positions such as treasurer better than men. Women can go to men and solicit for funds. A man cannot go to a man to collect money because both of them provide money for their households. Some men are happy when they see a woman in political leadership and would like to support her. With chairman I think men can do that better than women because of the respect they command in our society. It seems women don't respect other women who are leaders. For instance if the woman organizer says something we don't take it serious but when a man speaks we listen. Some women are jealous of your position and will not support you. There are few women who are not jealous and do not care.

Rose's view is informed by the often-held perception that women are better suited to be followers than leaders. This affects their expectations of positions women should contest for as leaders in the political arena.

There were mixed reactions when participants were asked to comment on the perception that women should not be in political leadership positions. Some of the women were of the view that it is outdated to think as such. Others were of the view that the women leaders are still facing that challenge and pointed to men as the obstacles in their endeavours to be leaders. They explained that women should be involved in leadership in order for them to champion the course of women, as noted in the following narratives.

Jane: *It is not right to conclude that women should not venture into politics. Formally women were suppressed and not allowed to be leaders but today it is not so. What men can do women can do and even do better. Today, because of education people have got to know that gone are the days women were sidelined. People should allow women to be active in various endeavours.*

Monica: *These perceptions existed some years ago. Today, I think there is a change and if you become a political leader people now respect you and they give you names such as Yaa Asantewaa, Margaret Thatcher and so on, so I think now the perception is changing. When they address you Yaa Asantewaa, it means you have taken the risk to get in that position. In some communities the men would not take instructions from you because you are a woman. So if they call you Yaa Asantewaa they want to say you are brave.*

Esi: *Why would people say that women are not supposed to go into politics? Our cultural background does not permit us to be involved in some of these things. Some people also think women cannot perform well in such positions. As a country the women are more than the men. God in his own wisdom created men and women so if only men are in politics then women issues would be left behind. Women take care of the family and as Kwegyir Aggrey said if you educate a woman you educate a nation. If a woman is in power championing the course of women they would be empowered to help their husbands to raise*

their children. Women do not take unnecessary risk. They work with passion and would like to have result. Although men would work to pull women down but it is time to encourage women to get on board to participate in political leadership.

Ama: It is not true that women are not supposed to be in politics. I don't expect people who are enlightened and people who know much in social issues, those in politics and those who want the good of society to say that women are not supposed to be in politics. Oh I will say women should rather go into politics. The problem is that the men do not allow women to go into politics. Women have many problems and are able to identify the problems in the community.

She continued:

Today, we are educating people and telling them that it was in the past that women were sidelined. I always tell them to compare women's performance in politics with that of the men and I used myself as an example. I always tell them that they have had assemblymen in our suburb and that they should compare their performance with mine.

Grace: I don't agree that women should not venture into political leadership. Some people believe that if you are a woman, married and you enter into politics you will not have time for your husband and children as your time will be limited. I think if you can manage your time as a woman you can be in political leadership.

Hellen: It is not true that women are not supposed to be in political leadership. I think the percentage of women should even be more than men in politics. This is because women are always passionate about issues. They think about development. Most women are not corrupt. Out of ten you can get only one who is corrupt so left to me alone the country should be left in the hands of women.

4.6 Challenges

Research Question 3: What challenges confront them in both their aspirations and performance of their leadership roles?

4.6.1 Financial Constraints

Financial constraints were the major challenge that all the women talked about even though some of them occasionally had sponsors. Most women are not working in the formal sectors and where they do, they occupy lower positions that go with lower pay because of their low educational background. Most of the women participants (12) were operating small businesses of their own and had difficulties raising funds for the financial demands of their positions. They talked mostly about financial challenges when they were asked to comment on the most recurring challenges.

Doreen: In Ghana women do not have resources or assets that will help them to succeed. The issue is how can the women get the money to use to get political position? There are few NGOs who come in to support in terms of logistics – T-shirt, posters, flyers. That is why political leadership is a male dominated venture. The women will find it difficult in getting loan because most of them do not have collateral security. Moreover, some women are afraid to go for loans but the men are daring and can go for loans for that. The men normally have collateral security.

Hellen had this to say,

About the financial problems, when there is a man who is interested and feels he can help you he may want to have sexual relationship with you. You may not want to do that and so it affects you seriously.

She continued:

If you don't have the money and you want to be a politician it is not easy. The men who were contesting with me had resources. One of them had someone to sponsor him and he was the incumbent. Being a woman and a

teacher it was not easy for me but God being so good regardless of those challenges I was able to go through.

Rita made this comment,

Men do not provide funding for women unless they have a hidden agenda. But as a woman I have to protect my integrity.

Monica also said,

In this community even though the people are into Agriculture they do not have the land. About 60% to 70% of the people are into subsistence farming so if you are political leader you are seen as a pivot and they bring all their financial problems to you. They come to me with their problems to manage their problems for them.

Jane stated,

Quarterly each assembly man or woman is supposed to be paid GH¢20.00 but they do not pay. They only give us a sitting allowance and transportation which is GH ¢ 35.00 per the quarterly meetings if it comes off. They deduct tax from the money so at the end we get less than the GH ¢ 35.00. At first the area was able to get money from the KVIP in that area but now all the money go to the assembly.

She Continued,

I need money to get some of things I need for my area. The common fund does not come, the internally generated fund is also inadequate. Besides, the people in the community are reluctant to use their money to pay for the street light bulbs, etc. This makes the work difficult. I have to pay fees, register people on the National Insurance, buy school bags, etc.

Rebecca: *There are many things that the people expect you to spend your own money on. If people come and do any work in the community they expect you to give them money after the work. When street lights bulbs are off they expect you to change the bulbs with your own money. Even if anybody makes an announcement on an issue concerning the community you will have to pay. They invite me to attend any programme from naming ceremonies to funerals not forgetting the church activities and always they expect that you donate money. However, the assembly sitting allowance which is ¢35.00 is not being paid to us. In fact, if you are not working or do not have any means of getting money regularly you cannot work as an assembly woman. The people think we are being paid. When they sack their children from school it is the assembly woman who has to pay. If somebody is sick you have a problem. If there is armed robbery case in your area you have problem.*

Doreen: *I have been supporting my family but now if for instance my mother asks me something I direct her to my other siblings. This is because of the pressure on me. I prefer satisfying people's desire instead of that of my family. If you are not careful it will affect your own children. Others are there asking for so many things you have to provide some for them. When they ask for something and you do not give to them it can go a long way to affect you.*

They were also sometimes pressurized to use their influence to help their constituents acquire loans.

Talking about her experience Jane said: *Some of the people in my community came to me that they needed money to work for them to be able to care for their families. I consulted some banks - Nyarkrom Rural Bank, Akyempim Bank and others- to give them loans. They gave them more than 1 billion they couldn't pay back. If I have guaranteed for some people to get the loan and they have refused to pay how can the rest get some of the loan?*

The respondents revealed that people compare what happens at one suburb with another. It may be that the assembly woman or man in that suburb has money and has been able to organise some activities but she may be construed as having collected money that should be shared. The people in the community make comments such as everybody must get money, we are suffering and you are enjoying.

During the focus group discussions it emerged that even though both the assembly men and women need money, the women have bigger challenges with finance than the men.

Amos: *Though both the men and women face financial problems our access to resources is better than the women. Some of us are in the formal sector, others are self employed or proprietors and have money and are able to provide some of the things. For instance 2012 X'mas the assembly gave us 1 bag of 5kilo rice and I had to buy 5 bags in addition to share to the elders in the villages under my jurisdiction. You will go to a village and an old woman will tell you that the whole day she has not eaten. You have to provide some money for food. The assembly*

women are mostly petty traders and do not have much money comparatively. (Assembly man and a professional teacher, 41 years)

Kofi aged 47, an assembly man and a farmer: *Oh yes, the women in political leadership have problems more than men when it comes to financial challenges. The women are normally worried if they face financial difficulties but some of us are not bothered much. (Assembly man and a farmer, 47 years)*

4.6.2 Traditional and Religious Beliefs and Perceptions

Some people still believe that women cannot be effective in leadership positions and are expected to look up to men when it comes to decision making. Others also think that if a woman becomes a leader she will be arrogant and will not respect people. These perceptions normally influence people's attitudes towards women leaders in the political arena. In the interviews and the focus group discussions it was noted that there is unfavourable perception of women as leaders, as seen in the following quotations.

Mary: *Our perception concerning women is not good. In some communities the men would not take instructions from you because you are a woman. They do not accept the fact that a woman is their leader. Some women also behave in the same way.*

Rebecca: *The men do not allow the women to go into politics. They suppress the women and most of the women just back off. Some women also pose problems for other women who want to go into politics. If you are not determined you will not go into politics. The saying that women are their own enemies is really true.*

Ama: *Sometimes, the people have perception that when women are in high positions they don't respect people but this is not true. If you are in a higher position and you don't respect the men you will not be there for a long time. In politics if you don't value everybody you will not be in your position for a long time because everybody's vote counts. The way you will interact with the person may change the person's perception about you.*

Hellen: *If the men see that as a woman you are getting ministerial appointment they feel you are not supposed to be in that position. They will pull you down. It is not easy for women to accomplish their mission because we are surrounded by*

men. If you want to progress they will be discouraging you, “pull her down” here and there when you get to that position.

Interviewee: Why will they do that?

Hellen: *The men feel they are men and should occupy the highest position and women should be at the grassroots. We are rubbing shoulder with them and it is not easy.*

Ama: *If you consider the Muslims they don't allow women to lead them but during my campaign I went to a Muslim community and I was allowed to go and stand there to talk to them. But before I went there some people thought that they will not allow me to speak to them because they don't allow women to lead them. Most of my supporters came from that community and I had some of them in my campaign team. They were advising me not to be discouraged. Politics should be gender balanced. Everybody can be there. It is not there for only men.*

Nora: *I am living in a Muslim community and what I will say is Muslim religion has brain washed some of them. Even in some Christian communities they believe it is the men who should be leaders. You have to work hard in order to convince them. (Assembly woman from a Muslim community, 63 years)*

At a focus group discussion, John a 34-year old assembly man emphasized that:

As Ghanaians our culture and religious beliefs do not support women to be in politics. Frankly speaking, I have that belief that women should not lead. The Bible talks about a man being the head not a woman. In the Bible just a day that a woman took the lead to go and bring food she brought problems and they were sacked from the Garden of Eden. In the Bible they always trace the generation through males.

Charles (39 years) on the other hand believes that although men should lead, they must consult women about their needs.

I believe we should allow the natural laws to operate. I don't think the women should lead but men can consult them in order to provide their needs. Our traditional set up also does not support women leadership. The source of social change in our traditional set up is coming from globalization or what? We have to maintain our identity by keeping the women at the sideline. Where do we draw the line in terms of traditional beliefs on women's role and men's role to show our identity? Gender affects my decision as I am a Ghanaian.

Amos also noted: *I don't have problem if women become political leaders. They bring diversity in the way we see things so we should rather encourage them.*

Based on the views recounted in this sub-section, it is apparent that some assembly men and some people in the society in general continue to doubt the leadership abilities of women. They see the lower status of women as natural instead of looking at it in the context of patriarchy and social relations.

4.6.3 Marriage

Marriage as a traditional practice is treasured and desired by most women in Ghana. Married accords recognition and respect in society, hence some of the participants consider it as one of the criteria for election to political leadership. Their underlying reason is that married women are likely to be more morally and socially responsible than unmarried ones. Traditionally, a woman is supposed to seek permission from the husband before taking part in any activity in the public domain. In the absence of the husband she has to obtain that permission from the husband's people. This in a way poses a challenge to married women.

Marriage was therefore identified as an institution that can compromise women's leadership ambitions in politics. The respondents stated that some of their husbands oppose the idea that they should become political leaders for varied reasons. For instance, some of husbands think their wives are going to use the family resources for politics, some are afraid that their wives would be exposed to other men, others are wary of their wives' exposure to insults from their political opponents among others, or the disrespect

from their wives as a result of the prominent role they assume in society. The following shows some of their views.

Rebecca: *Marriage can pose a challenge to women in politics. When I was a woman organizer in 1996 my husband did not like me to be in politics so I had to stop. Later when I realized that he was becoming a stumbling block to my political career we had to divorce and now I am back in politics. He was suppressing me and was always preventing me to be in active politics. He was always talking about the money I was using. However, in 2000 he came out that he wants to be a constituency chairman.*

Esi: *Some people say that women who go into politics are not morally upright but what I will say is that as a married woman before you enter into politics you have to discuss it with your husband. I had discussion with my husband concerning my desire to be an assembly woman. He supported me but advised me to be careful with my interactions with the people in order to maintain my dignity and warn me against people from the media houses. I have contrary view about the media because I believe for me to excel in politics they may contribute in selling my ideas to the people but I have to listen to my husband.*

Hellen corroborated the above view and said:

I am among the few women leaders whose husbands support them, yet he keeps on telling me not to allow journalist to interview me. He does not want me to be visible but in politics you have to be visible.

Amina:

Some women had already gone into politics and the problems they face deter others to go into politics. For instance a woman may go through many challenges before marrying but through politics she can be divorced by the husband. I don't have a husband or a boy friend. I sell to look after my children so any time I am needed by the party I just go. Nobody questions me.

At the focus group discussion the assembly men pointed out that although married women in politics normally have problems, married men do not experience that.

Kwame: *Many women have problems in politics. The moment you contest people try to investigate your nuclear family, extended family etc. Some people fabricate stories. Women cannot stand that. Most of the successful women in politics have problem in their marriages. If the husband is also a politician you will not have problem. Most of the time, the women face the challenge of choosing between their political career and their marriages. (Assembly man and a professional teacher, 44 years)*

Single women also encounter challenges as noted in the following excerpts.

Mercy: *If you stand firm as unmarried woman the people will protect you and fight on your behalf. A lot of people will propose to you, and if you are not careful you will think the men love you. By the time you come to your senses many things have occurred and you have tarnished your image.*

Rita: *I don't have a husband and I am in politics. Whatever they say about me concerning my moral life, I don't care because I try to be upright and firm. I don't want any man to disturb me. I have gone through a lot that is why I have entered politics in full time. Given my full time to politics help me not to think about marriage and other things. I know it is not easy to stay alone. Politics takes my time so I don't idle around. I attend meetings, seminars, etc.*

Jane: *Being the woman organizer and assembly woman if I even talk to their husbands they feel I am going to snatch their husband from them. They don't understand that I have to interact with people including married men.*

4.6.4 Performance of gender roles

The participants especially married ones noted the importance of properly combining their domestic activities with politics; else they would face accusations of neglecting their children and husbands. Some of the women believed that being able to effectively perform domestic roles is indicative of one's ability to enter into leadership roles in politics.

Mary talking about her experience said: *I have to combine the traditional roles effectively with the role I perform as an assembly woman.*

Concerning child care Kate had this to say:

I have not faced much challenges. The challenges I have are with the catering for my children. When I travel I leave the young ones with the elderly one.

In a focus group discussion the challenges of combining marriage, child upbringing and work outside of the home emerged. For instance, some husbands become uncooperative if the woman has to attend too many meetings. It came to light that some

of the women leaders by the nature of their leadership positions do not have time to perform domestic roles even though they would have loved to do so. Expressing her views on challenges, Hellen said:

If you do not get a husband who understands you it will not be easy. What he will say is that you don't respect him. For instance being a Minister you will be busy, you will have your own programmes and programmes that others have planned for you. You will not have time for your children. You will wake up at dawn and leave home always while your children are still asleep. If you do not get a good house help who can look after your children by the time you come to the realization, the children may be "spoilt". Your marriage can also collapse. But if you get a husband who is understandable and if you are traveling you call him regularly to give him update, he may support you. Some husbands will understand in the beginning especially if money is coming but later things may change. If you don't have a husband then any man who comes your way will like to propose to you. The opposition members may even come to get you in order to tap information from your party.

In all these, the research responses tend to reveal that performance of gender roles continues to pose a challenge to women in political leadership especially those who are married and have children who are in their developmental stages.

4.6.5 Gender and performance of political roles

In the study the women were asked to talk about the roles and responsibilities they perform as political leaders. Some of them noted that they liaise between the government and the people, explain the government policies to the people and send the needs of the people in the community to the assembly. In addition, they organise and educate the people on the need to be active in politics. Also, they lobby for assistance for their communities and make sure things work well in the area under their control. The following were the views expressed by some participants on performance of their political roles:

Rebecca: *I make sure the children in my community go to school, the community is clean. The community members also tell me their needs for me to send it to the assembly so that at the appropriate time it is provided for them. Provide street lights; make sure the bushy areas are weeded. My area is being occupied by well educated people so I have fewer problems. I help organize communal labour to clean the community.*

Doreen: *As a legislature in Accra I help to formulate laws and help address the challenges confronting the district. I have to collaborate with the DCE to make sure the challenges are addressed.*

Rita: *I organize the women especially when they are in difficulties or crises. Sometimes, the women request that they need a loan to trade with. You have to lobby some banks to help. All the women need money to trade with as they have to work to cater for the children as today, providing for a child has become the responsibilities of women.*

Rose: *As a treasurer any money from the region comes to me and any work that we have to do, they ask for the money from me to be used. If there is any occasion or a visit of a president and there is no money as a treasurer I have to look for money for the preparation and after the visit they pay back. As a treasurer if the party needs something I have to look for money to provide and later they bring the money. Sometimes I visit rich party supporters who are not regular at meetings and sometimes collect money from them. When I get the money I inform the party members. If we are traveling I have to solicit for funds if there is no money.*

According to Mercy, another constituency treasurer, although she had won three consecutive times (twelve years) for that position the party chairman usurps her authority by collecting and using money in the name of party without any accountability. She expressed her disappointment profusely and pointed out that she would like to contest for women's organizer but not the treasurer. Talking about her experience Mercy said:

There are few women in politics in our area and I felt treasurer is for women that is why I stood for that position and they voted for me as the constituency treasurer. The executives have been instrumental in all my elections. The last elections I contested with a man and won. I have been the constituency treasurer for 12 years. I was the woman organizer for the branch and when I got the constituency treasurer I gave up that one.

She continued:

As a treasurer, the constituency chairman and other executives do not allow me to handle money and we are not paid. If there is money it is the chairman who handles it. Sometimes I hear that there is some money at other times too I don't hear anything. I don't want to do anything that will bring confusion in the party. As time goes on I want to contest for the constituency women organizer because being the constituency treasurer, I am not allowed to do my job.

During the field work the researcher observed that 11 out of the 20 women involved in the study had busy work schedules while the rest were busy at specific times in the day or week. Those who had busy work schedules were apparently seriously engaged in political roles. For instance, at one time some assembly men met Hellen at her house to discuss issues at the district assembly. At another time she attended meetings and came home late so her children did not realise that she had come back. The children told me that she did not come home the previous day. It was when I called her that she said she was around.

The respondents were asked whether their gender affects the performance of their roles. At the interview sessions most of the women noted that it did not affect the performance of their roles. However, during the focus group discussions the assembly men argued that the women have both physical and biological limitations to comfortably deal with the difficult terrains they operate in. For example, most of the areas had unmotorable roads hence they need to walk long distances or at best travel on motor bikes ridden by others. The women conceded their dependence on male party executives and other well wishers during their campaigns for re-elections and other regular activities. The assembly men are able to visit all those places themselves. It also came out

that child bearing and child caring sometimes pose a challenge to women leaders in their reproductive stage.

Interviewer: Does your gender affect your ability to perform your work?

Jane: *No, my gender does not affect my work as political leader.*

Ama: *No, my gender does not affect the effectiveness of my work as a leader.*

Interviewer: Does women's gender affect their ability to perform their work as political leaders?

Kofi: Yes

Interviewer: How does it affect their ability to perform their work as leaders?

Kofi: *Women's gender affects their roles as political leaders. Party executives have to help in their campaign. There are so many places that the women are unable to go. In some places when you go you will come in the night because the places are not motorable. You have to walk long distances.*

Kwame: *I have 50 smaller communities. I send a car to where cars can reach and walk to the villages. I am able to visit these communities because I am a man. If you are not able to go to them from time to time they will not vote for you. I have to send bread, touchlight, cutlass, rice etc.*

Mary: *In fact, our gender sometimes affects us. For instance if your child is sick it is not easy. You will have to stop everything and attend to that child and if it is campaign time it becomes more challenging. It is good for women who have reached menopause. Child care poses a challenge.*

The researcher is of the view that although the assembly men and women agreed during the focus group discussion that women's gender affect the performance of their work as leaders, issues such as walking for long distances, sending food to people in villages and child care that were raised may not pose serious challenges to women. It is only child bearing, breastfeeding and other biological roles that can limit women in their performance of leadership roles. In terms of the research

objective concerning challenges confronting women in political leadership, it follows that their gender sometimes affects the performance of their roles as political leaders.

4.6.6 Double Standards

Politics has been dominated by men for so long a time that the political culture reflects male characteristics and values. Consequently, male traits are used as a yardstick for the participation and performance of people in political leadership. Such values are not in consonance with female traits. Women who venture into politics are expected to be bold, assertive and aggressive to tussle for power. This in a way presents a greater challenge for women in politics. The political leadership positions that they are occupying also demand that they exhibit male characteristics and these present double standards for the women in politics. The women in political leadership involved in the study agreed that they are in the man's world and they have to be bold to get the positions they want. This seems to support Freire's (1970) theory of "the pedagogy of the oppressed" which indicates that the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, people tend to become oppressors, or "sub-oppressors". Their ideal is to be men. The women in the study shared their experience when asked of the challenges confronting them as leaders.

Hellen: Political leadership is a male dominated job and you should possess qualities such as being bold and assertive. If a man MP is working hard and going to places you have to do same. You should not say that you are a woman and that people should do things for you if your male counterparts (MP) are doing it themselves.

She continued: *There is nothing good that comes easy but sometimes it is a challenge. It is man's world so we are expected to behave and work like the men and address issues as such.*

Ama: *A woman who is assertive they say you are aggressive if you are firm you are considered "too known" however if you decide that you will behave as a woman you will not get the needed support from the people.*

The views shared by the women indicate that although they are women the political culture is compelling them to behave as men and this in a way may affect their identity as women and subsequently have challenge with identity problem. This is because if they force themselves to behave like their male counterparts they are still females yet people may see them behaving as males. This will bring the situation Ama talked about that they are considered aggressive if they become assertive. The women leaders may be in dilemma whether to behave as females or males as their status as political leaders demand.

Also, the participants were of the views that different moral codes are set for women leaders in politics. According to them the moral standards set for women are far higher than those set for men. Consequently, men in political leadership are free to lead their lives without being accused of exhibiting bad behaviour. Women on the contrary are accused of exhibiting bad behaviour if they do the same things that the men do and are not held accountable. They noted further that the single men in political leadership are not questioned but the single women are always reminded to settle down and marry. The following are some of the views expressed by some of the female participants in this regard.

Doreen: *Looking at our background as Ghanaians we have our limit as women. For instance, in politics men can go so far. The men have a way of behaving which is accepted. For instance a man who is a parliamentarian can still visit friends and drink with them but if a woman behave that way it will not be accepted she will be accused of being bad influence on society. For instance a woman political leader cannot put people in her car and visit one spot after the other but it is accepted for the men to do that. Moral standard set are different for men.*

Ama: *Some people used to tell me “Oh you are so beautiful” “why are you in politics”. “Are you married”, “Do you have children” these were some of the questions they asked. The men who are in political leadership are not asked these questions. Apart from these questions, the men use some words to tag you to make you confused. We should accept that it is man’s world.*

Ama continued: *Sometimes, people think that if you lobby and work hard for things for your community because you are a woman you have exchanged sexual favours for those things. That is the perception most people have. A man can go and lobby for the same thing and if he gets it people will never say that he has exchanged sexual favour for it. You know women are gifted in the way we talk to people to ask for things and some people hold women in high esteem and cannot look at a woman and deny her what she asked for so we can also lobby and get things done like our male counterpart.*

Rose: *The men normally meet and if there is something they take the best part before they share what is left for the women. When the women later get to know about that then they talk about it as if they have the rights to take a lion’s share if not this there is no problem. Some people are greedy which is not good. The men cheat us. As women we cannot be equal with the men but they should be transparent and not greedy.*

Unlike the men, the women’s freedom to lead their lives as they wish is restricted somehow as there are moral codes restricting their behaviour.

4.6.7 Misunderstanding in political party

Misunderstanding or disagreement is a part of human life and it is how it is handled that it may pose a challenge. Women in political leadership encounter disagreements from time to time like their male counterparts. Sometimes, disagreement arises within a party because some executive members want their favourites to contest in certain positions. Also, the mere fact that they are bold and hard-working, which is seen as a threat to the men, may generate controversy within the party. These were some of the issues the women raised.

Monica sharing her experience stated:

Before 2008 elections, I had a confrontation with my chairman. The chairman was against me. Even my opponent was disqualified yet my chairman abandoned me and as I was campaigning he was campaigning against me. It really affected me so I lost the 2008 election. The chairperson had his preferred candidate living outside the country and because he is the chairman and had the final say he opposed me. Although the national executives stepped in at the end of the day our front was splitted and it contributed to my lost in the 2008 parliamentary elections.

Jane a constituency women's organizer and assembly woman stated:

I was deeply involved in the campaign before the 2012 elections. We did dawn outreach, house to house campaign, etc. Sometimes we go out and when I am coming to sleep it will be 11pm, 12 pm or 1am. The MP was aware. When the MP lost we were all affected and felt that we were dreaming. I know he spent a lot so he will feel it so in a week's time I decided to visit him to find out the way forward. When I went he said he has got some letter from the opponent camp that he has bought the people, the party chairman is his friend and I, the women organizer is under his control. In fact, I was worried because how can I close my store for six months engaging in campaigns if at the end of the day I am supporting my opponent. If somebody sent this letter, do you have to believe it? We are now not in talking terms. He has now selected some people to vote the old executive out of power (overthrow us) and bring in new executives. I have gone to the region to report the issue to the regional chairman to come and settle the issue else it can rather destroy the party.

Rita had this to say:

We attended a meeting and were asked to form a women's wing. I came back and set up the women's wing. Some of my colleagues questioned me not to set it as it can create problem for me. I am now encountering problems. The vice for the women's wing accused me that when I am attending meetings I don't go with her. I asked her whether I am under her or she is under me. She still passes on certain comment. I was at the MP's place when she led the members of the women's wing there without telling me anything. I did not mind them. They are now saying they will vote me out.

She continued:

When we attend meetings and I am talking the one I selected to assist me to lead the women's wing will just step in to say what I want to tell them. I normally stop and look at her. After the meeting the people will ask why she is behaving that way. If I confront her people would say we were fighting within the party. The other executive members called her and talked to her but she is still creating problems.

Ama an assembly woman who is also constituency women organizer said:

After the 2000 election round-off, an incidence happened. I was in the house when a lady came and asked what I have done to the other constituency executive members. She said they held a meeting saying that you took everything in your hand and did not allow them to play a part. As for me if I hear anything about me and there is anybody's name attached to it I go straight to that person's house to enquire and explain things to the person in a peaceful way. If I explain and you do not understand I take it that you want to sabotage me and I will rather let people know what had happened whether you are old or young. I don't want my party to be destroyed. I used my own money and other things to support the party.

4.6.8 Party politics in the District assembly

The respondents also talked about politicization of issues and party politics in the District Assemblies. Some of the assembly women were of the view that they are sidelined at the assembly because their party is not in power. Besides, relating with other assembly men and women is sometimes a problem because they are from different political parties and people interpret it differently.

Sharing her experience Rebecca said: *If they identify the party you belong to and your political party is not in power you suffer. They will never provide the needs of your community. Sometimes, they discriminate in sharing things in the assembly because of the political association. It is highly partizan. It is purely political so even for someone to be the chair of the various committees it is the party in power that controls it.*

Esi also stated: *In the District assembly if they realize that you are affiliated to different party instead of the party in power that is where you have problem. If in the Assembly they identify your political affiliation it will not be easy for you. In terms of development your area will be far behind even though you will try to do our best.*

Sharing her experience, Jane had this to say:

The people do not expect that you should even talk to other assembly members in other political parties. But in the assembly we are all there so if you see that person and you communicate with him people conclude that you are giving the person some information from your party. After the recent election the people were saying that there is a man who is in the other party who is my friend so they have concluded that I have been furnishing him with information from my party and this is tarnishing my image as a politician.

4.6.9 Other Issues confronting women in political leadership

Other challenges confronting the women were insult from people, hatred and envy, black mailing and sabotage. Some women do not like insults, insinuations and the disturbances that characterize Ghanaian politics so there are few who contest for political leadership. The few (who are in political leadership) are discouraged because of the things or stories people tend to fabricate and say about them.

During the focus group discussions, the assembly men and women noted the rampancy of insults, castigations and blackmailing. They all agreed that women bear the brunt of this more than the men. For instance some of them are disrespected, told rudely

to dress properly and called names such as whores or prostitutes even when they are married women. It also came out that these negative behaviours and attitudes become intense during campaign times when their opponent wants them to lose focus.

The participants indicated that the people have been insulting them and their family members. They feel helpless because they do not want to alienate these people who claim they voted for them. The Members of Parliament also expressed the same sentiment. The following are some of the views respondents shared when they were asked to talk about their challenges.

Hellen: *You are going to face a lot of challenges especially from the men. The men would disgrace you when they hear of your intention to be in Parliament. Some would just say that you are a prostitute.*

She further stated: *The situation is sometimes bad that even if you dress up people just pass comment that she has dressed up to go and collect money in exchange of sex.*

Nora: *Some even go to the extent of telling me that I have not been to school and that I am illiterate. I once told one man who came out with such utterance that we have wisdom, intelligent and book knowledge and so he should not talk about only school.*

Rita: *When I was contesting for the women organizer some of the people thought I do not come from this town so one of them came and told me to go to my home town. If you want to be in politics anybody can insult you. Somebody told me to go and give birth with my party chairman as it has happened before. The person was a grown up.*

Some of the women also noted that some men are envious of their position because they do not like women to lead them. They explained that they may like the positions but because of their character and other reasons they cannot contest. They added however that their fellow women display the same tendency instead of solidarising with them. These are some of the views they shared.

Rita: *There are some women who do not have any leadership qualities or skills they will envy you. Sometimes the women are envious than the men. Especially if they see that certain things come to you for you to share.*

Esi: *I have observed that people envy you if you get such political positions. I realized that there are some people who are against me so I pray for them. If the people see that you are working and making progress they begin to hate you. So I try to deal with them in such a way that there is no confrontation.*

Doreen: *At times, being a political leader creates enmity among the people of your town although most of them voted for you. Because the women in parliamentary position are few if you rise to that level there is envy. Some of them normally make certain comment such as "Oh, Madam...Child, look at her". The people may shun your company. Some may behave as if they do not know you. This may put unnecessary stress on you. Also, it can even go a long way to affect your family. Some people may become envious of the position.*

It is significant therefore to state that some women also create problems for the women leaders. These women exhibit negative attitudes such as hatred and envy toward women leaders.

In response to the question regarding their greatest challenge, some of the women leaders considered black mailing and sabotaging as the greatest and most worrisome.

Interviewer: What has been your greatest challenge?

Hellen expressing her views on her greatest challenge stated:

When we were going for the general election I was contesting with a Municipal Chief Executive whose party is in power and it was not easy. I was given a name. Being a married woman I was blackmailed that my campaign manager was sleeping with me. So it was hell for me. I had three children for my husband but some people came out that two of my children have different fathers. It nearly ruins me and weighed me down. Later I was able to clear the air. That was my greatest challenge being blackmailed. What is serious is that the person saying this is from your own camp. As a woman if you enter politics people will frame such stories about you. If you are not married then you are not married.

Interviewee: Do you face such a challenge from time to time?

Hellen: *I don't have much problem now. It is when you are contesting with them that they have problem with you but when you get the position they see you as a colleague. Also when they hear that you are going to get a position they will not get, that one too there is a problem. They will do all that they can to get some information to tarnish your image. They feel you are using what you have to get it. That is also challenging. Once you get the position you feel comfortable but how to get there is the problem.*

Ama: *Sometimes, if you lobby for things for your community some people think because you are a woman you have exchanged sexual favours for those things. They will be going round formulating stories about you.*

Talking about her greatest challenge Kate said,

My sister who encouraged me to be in political leadership has turned against me and is sabotaging me. She discourages people to vote for me. I think when you are frank and open you are misunderstood and people think you are against them. The MP called a meeting of all the executives and asked us to talk about what we are not happy with. I told her that the way she treated some of the executives was not good but other executives misunderstood me and concluded that I am not in good terms with her.

Doreen: *Some people from my camp came to me to give them money. They can tell you give us this amount of money. If you allow them, they will go and come back again collecting money unlawfully. I told them I will not give them any money. Sometimes, there were decisions when you take, people may be worried. I told them they should do what they want but if you are not fortunate it can affect you negatively. They know you need money for your campaign yet they will come to you to give them ten thousand (GH 10,000.00) Ghana cedis. How can you get that money? If you give them the chance to be taking such money from you it will affect you because you will be thinking about how to get money for them.*

Despite these experiences shared by the female participants, during the field work the researcher observed that they interacted very well with their colleagues, visitors and other workers. This typifies the assertion that in politics, those who smile to you may not necessarily be your friends.

4.7 Effects of the challenges on women leaders

The sampled women asked to comment on the impact of the challenges noted that it affects them personally in their interactions with people, their work and sometimes even make them question their decisions to be in politics. For instance, they are sometimes shunned by some of their constituents because of perceived negligence. But in the estimation of the participants especially the assembly women they do their utmost considering the circumstances and constraints under which they operate. This apparent lack of appreciation dampens their spirit and willingness to make sacrifices to mitigate the challenges of the communities. The following extracts indicate their views.

Interviewee: How do these challenges that you face affect you as a leader?

Monica: *The people may shun your company if you turn down their financial demands. Some may behave as if they do not know you. This may put unnecessary stress on you. Those who are not experienced in politics can easily back out of it if they face such challenges. It will really affect you. Some people normally opt out because of this.*

Mary: *I sometimes feel bad and always say that I have handed myself to them to be insulted. The interest I had before entering into politics is no more there. I have lost that interest. There are some men who have been working against me because I am a woman. Some of the people who supported me have turned against me. I am now disappointed. The chiefs are not doing anything in the community. Everything is on the assembly woman.*

Hellen: *Initially when it started it dampened my spirit. As a married woman tagged with that “she is morally corrupt” “has committed adultery” I could not go out because I was worried and was thinking about what the people will say. I was not feeling fine at all. It took time before I was able to overcome it.*

Dorinda: *The challenges affect me because if I consider the effort I put in and that the people do not appreciate what I do. I have in mind to end after this term. I have been there for three terms and I have to give in to others especially the young ones.*

Esi: *With my interaction with people where the person is annoyed with me I asked for the reason, explain and where necessary ask for forgiveness. Though you are not afraid of the people but because you need something from them (vote) you have to be humble.*

She continued: *Through these challenges I have learnt to be careful to talk to people. It has made me a good listener. I allow people to talk so that they will not be angry. After talking I talk to them. If I have to apologize I do so and count on them. I am not afraid even though I am careful. Though I am soft at times at other times too I am hard to be able to do the work well.*

Ama: *If you are not able to exercise patience and stand to the test you can back off. It is not easy at all. Some people will understand you but others will not. Sometimes too you have to sacrifice a bit and use your own money to do certain things in your community because the more the people complain about you the more you lose your popularity and support. They can use that against you.*

Rita: *If you consider those who are jealous and envious of your position you will not be able to do your work. If you look at those people you cannot progress. I have been in it for a long time and know that it is part of the game so I take it that it is normal.*

Doreen: *With my interaction with people the challenges rather had positive effects on me. I have told the people my problems, what I could do for them and what I can't do. I made them see me as a genuine person who speaks the truth and tell people what I can do and what I can't do. It strengthens me and they also realized they have to help me come out. If you are not able to support the people at all you will realize that the people will not be happy with you and can be against you. They will go round telling people you are mean etc. It is always monetary demands. This work is like writing an examination and so you are not expected to get 100% if you get 70% it is sometimes graded A. The bottom line is although such demands may be stressful you have to do your best.*

4.8 Dealing with the challenges

Research Question 4: How do they manage and/or solve these challenges?

Interpersonal skills such as acceptance, tolerance, acquiescence, empathy and cooperative behaviour were used by the women to manage the problems and challenges they face.

Asked about what they consider to be the ideal ways to deal with the issues, they noted:

Jane: *From time to time we have to invite the various stakeholders – seamstresses, market women, students and others and explain to them what is happening. With this the people will understand what is happening. However, I am not able to do that from time to time because of money. I cannot spend my own money for that because my store is now collapsed.*

Interviewee: Are you happy with the way you deal with the challenges?

Jane: *I'm not happy with the way I am dealing with the challenges. I have not been able to provide the needs of my people, for instance construction of roads, provision of street lights and meters. Because of these it will be difficult for me to contest again. (Jane's demeanor changed and she was quiet and disturbed).*

Others tolerate the challenges by adjusting their way of life to suit the situation as a way of internalizing the everyday occurrences.

Esi: *Well, it is frustrating if you send the problems of the community to the assembly and nothing is done to that effect. Well, I do pray about that so that things that are hindering the provision of the things be removed and I continue to ask.*

Interviewee: Are you happy with the way you deal with the challenges?

Esi: *No, that is why I pray. I hope things will be better at the assembly.*

Doreen: *I am frank to my people. With their numerous requests for paying fees and others with the numbers I can't pay and so I work towards it. Sometimes, I have to rely on other people's advice partially to deal with issues.*

She continued,

Sometimes, I tell myself I would have to take this challenge out of my way. Go to bed and at dawn when I wake up the ideas come into my mind on what I should do. So as a politician you don't have to sleep for even eight hours but less than that so that at dawn you ponder over your challenges and the way forward.

Emelia: I deal with my challenges through prayers, tolerance and advice. When the challenges come I moved to people for advice.

Ama: Sometimes, if you hear some of the things about you and you do not investigate to find amicable solutions to them it may draw some people away from you. The people may think you have taken what belongs to them and harbour some things against you. So you have to meet all those whose names are involved and explain to them in a cordial way.

While some of them are unable to solve the issues and lived with them as in the preceding cases, others found ways to solve them. Naturally those who succeeded in mitigating the challenges obtained further mandate and legitimacy as they were able to capitalize on their challenges.

Doreen is one of such women leaders:

With financial problems I sometimes get some sponsors to help me out. NGO's, benevolent institutions and individuals sometimes come in to help with funds and logistics...

Well, it is a matter of determination. If you are focused and you think you have something good to offer to your people the insults should not prevent you from being in your position. I have been hardened and I have stuck my head out so there is no way I will back off. If you are doing well the people say it, you see it in their behaviour and you are encouraged to go on to do more.

Dorinda also stated,

I met the chiefs and the members of the community and we all agreed to pay a small levy to help with replacement of street light bulbs and to do other things in the community.

According to Rebecca:

The landlords/ ladies association is helping my community so I always rely on them. They have been contributing money for the work in the community.

While Grace recounted: *From time to time, the community leaders call for meetings and invite me. I visit the area on Sundays to interact with the people. I also try to be nice to those I have identified as my enemies. A good leader should accept whatever happens and analyze them to take good action.*

While some of them felt some satisfaction with their efforts, others believed that they could do more.

Interviewer: Are you happy with the way you deal with the challenges?

Mary: *I am not happy with the way it is but I don't have any option.*

Rita: *I am happy with the way I have dealt with my challenges. I do not think about the challenges as that can even give you health problems. Sometimes I get the best solution at other times it is partial. Sometimes you don't have to accept your fault in the presence of the person but you find a way to deal with it. For some people they will "spoil" the case if you accept your fault in their presence. But for some people you have to accept it.*

Rose: *Yes, I am happy with the way I am dealing with the challenges because I always get the support of the people. They listen to me. If I hear that there is any case I visit the person offended and plead.*

Doreen: *Sure, I am happy with the way I am dealing with the challenges I am facing because I am that type of person when you come and I don't have the support you need in terms of monetary I tell you. May be if there is a way I can direct you I will do it. Just this morning somebody was here on school fees. I was frank and directed him to write a letter to the district assembly. You have to calm the person and direct him/her. Let the people face realities. With their numerous requests for paying fees I can't pay and work towards it by directing them. I have to be frank to them.*

In the quest to unearth ideal ways of confronting the challenges the following emerged.

Jane: *The District Chief Executive should have sponsored the cost involved in the meetings that the Assembly woman will have with stakeholders such as market women, hairdressers etc. If you spend money for that it should be paid back. But it will not be paid back.*

Jane continued,

Ideally, the executives should have been prompt in responding to my call to come and investigate at the opposition's camp to help solve the problem that I am facing within the party concerning my party's candidate for Member of Parliament who lost the general elections. Yet, I have not heard from them. We should get money to provide enough street light. Also, we have paid for meters and they should supply them but few people had got the meters even though 100 people paid and I sent the money. There are some roads that the assembly should help us construct.

Dorinda: I think as much as you work hard to address the challenges you need to dialogue, educate the people and be transparent. If they see it and you are transparent they will support you. If they are kept in the dark you will not get their support. You have to engage them and give them information. If they are informed nobody can come and tell them lies.

Rose: We have to exercise patience and educate the people to understand the issues. If there is an issue, exercise patience, the truth will come out. Transparency is important so the people will understand you. If you get any money you have to let the people know.

Hellen: The ideal way is to advise politicians in general to let them know that women also have a role to play in politics and in the society. As the saying goes "behind every successful man there is a woman" we the women in politics are their wives and we are helping them so that the country will develop. Looking at "Big" politicians like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and others, before they came into power women played a major role and they acknowledged it. So if we take women out of politics it will never help because we have our own role to play in politics or to develop the nation.

A tentative conclusion is that while some of the female political leaders evolve ways to address the recurring challenges, others are constrained by a number of factors and are therefore unable to do so. The inability to tackle such challenges unfortunately discourages some from pursuing their interest in political leadership.

4.9 Expectations

During the focus group sessions, they were asked to state how women can be actively engaged in politics as well as suggest ways of meeting the challenges. The responses can be categorized into five issues namely, economic empowerment and good financial management practices, character building, education and training, harnessing of potentials and finally, consultation and lobbying.

Interviewee: With these challenges what is your expectations for women in political leadership in the Central Region?

Ben aged 43, an assembly man and a businessman stated,

The government should set aside some funds to help the women for now. Later the men can be included. That will encourage the women to boost their representation.

Amos corroborated,

Yes, the assembly should pay the assembly men and women monthly and add some incentives to that of women to help them with their work.

Joseph aged 56, an assembly man and a professional teacher also said,

The women should learn how to save money because politics is a capital intensive venture. They were advised on the need to be moderate in their spending and dressing to let the people feel that they are part of them. They should dance to the tune of the community. People will look at the way they dress and demand things from them.

They noted that not all women necessarily become arrogant when they are elected.

Rather the character of the person shapes his or her behaviour.

Mary: *Some women in leadership should work on their character and try to know how to relate with people especially if the people complain about their character. As women we should respect ourselves and should know how to talk and what to say at any time.*

Collins: *Yes, they should respect their husbands to win their support. If they respect them their husbands will encourage and help them.* (Assembly man and a professional teacher, 60 years old)

Dorinda: *Sometimes it is difficult to deal with the chiefs but if we are respectful we will be supported. It depends on character, if one wants to be good leaders.*

The respondents suggested that the people should be educated. They were of the view that though we are practicing democracy most people do not know their limit and say whatever they want.

Mary: *The people misinterpret democracy to mean freedom to say anything, insult people, etc. The people should be educated on the need to respect politicians and understand their work so that they will stop shirking their family responsibilities.*

The respondents advocated formal education and training for women especially those interested in political leadership as a way of empowering them to have confidence in themselves and to have the courage to vie for elective positions. The women were also advised to join politics early in order to net work with other politicians and be prepared to be in grass root positions early as that will pave ways for them.

Interviewer: Any suggestion for women in political leadership?

James: *Women should be willing to attain appreciable level of formal education, attend seminars, workshops and read, so as to be abreast with the nature of the political terrain.*

Kwame: *Women in political leadership have to present themselves well in the community and should join political parties and offer themselves for leadership positions in the party early to help groom them for higher positions.*

The respondents urged women who are gifted, intelligent, honest, compassionate, serviceable, dedicated, and humble to contest for political leadership positions. In doing so, they were encouraged to be assertive, know the positions they want and work to achieve them. They also advised women with such ambitions to be sociable and

respectful of others even if they did not have the means to provide what the electorate need.

Ama: *We should contest in our numbers and ignore “hear say” insult and complains because these are part of Ghanaian politics. We have to be focused and concentrate on the work. We can look up to some of the women like Christie Churcher, Ama Benyiwa Doe. Those who are gifted and honest should contest for positions.*

Rose: *We have to sacrifice in some way. Sometimes it is in small ways such as visiting the sick, etc.*

Instead of considering men as their enemies, they were advised to consult them when necessary, and also be tolerant of the views of others and not to be pompous.

Ben: *They should eschew division whether the people are in their party or not and lobby for things that will help them in their work.*

Mary: *Women who want to be political leaders should inform their future partners of their future plans and vision to lobby for their support. They should get the feedback before they accept their marriage proposals. The women leaders who are married should try to work in such a way that they will get their husbands support.*

Regarding their expectations, the female political leaders were encouraged to aspire and contest for challenging positions that will involve them in decision making, should start politics early, work hard, avail themselves of educational opportunities as well as attend workshops and seminars. They also advised them to be persistent in their aspirations.

Hellen for instance noted: *To prevent the men from cheating women in politics I think the women should contest for challenging positions that can enable them to be involved in decision making. This will enable us to know what is going on in the party. We have to be involved in politics for us to have peace. We the women are sympathetic, and we are more than the men.*

Ama: *The women should start early if they want to be in political leadership. Sometimes they may have to start at the constituency level as polling assistant and rise through the ranks; so it takes time.*

Monica: *We have to go to school and be well educated because if you are not educated you will be afraid that they will call you to read or sign something. Being well educated will enable them to be confident in themselves. Hopeful with time we will get many women who are well educated who will have the confidence to context in elections.*

Doreen: *My suggestion is that women political leaders should not sit down especially those who try and fail the first time when aspiring for higher positions, they should go on. If one door is closed another will be opened. They should read and take advantage of all the opportunities around, such as workshop, seminars, etc. I know a member of the Council of State who used to sell “wakye” and through the 31st Women’s took the workshops and seminars seriously and she was appointed a Counsel of State member. They shouldn’t think politics is men’s job. All the time they should yearn for the knowledge and not money that they will get after the workshop. They say “knowledge is power”. They will give them the lime light. Women should come out. As women, we have our limit but we shouldn’t coil but come out.*

Amina: *There is no easy way of doing things so they should take active part in case they get the position. They should do the work well and attend all the meetings. There are some assembly women who do not attend assembly meetings. The assembly meets 4 times in a year and if she is a committee member then there are other committee meetings. They should attend all.*

Emilia: *Things that convinced the people to vote for you should always be maintained and even be improved. Let people profit about you being elected. Do not give the people the chance to regret voting for women. Also, women who get afraid and feel victimized if the men challenge them, should know their rights and stand for that.*

These views throw light on women’s effective preparations towards political leadership and how they can manage associated challenges. These findings are discussed in Chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

The findings of the study are identified, interpreted and discussed in this chapter. Some of the issues discussed are motivation and discouragement to women in political leadership, primary motivators of women in political leadership, the perceptions of leadership, challenges and actions to solve such challenges.

Discussions

5.1 Motivation

This is based on the first research question: What factors motivate women to aspire to political leadership? On this, some participants indicated that they were intrinsically motivated while others were motivated by other people or some external forces. Participants such as Esi, Rita and Ama were self-motivated. They even considered their engagement in leadership roles as a calling. As Esi noted, “I had the conviction that I can help my people through politics”, whilst Rita stated, “I had interest in politics. I had an inward desire to go into politics”. Ama also said she could not sit down for things to spoil, and was convinced that she should enter politics. She believed her ability to settle dispute and lobby for developmental projects would serve her community well.

Other participants such as Rita, Hellen and Amina noted that they were encouraged by some people to engage in such roles. Sharing her experience Rita stated,

“I was motivated by the late Theresa Amerley Tagoe and Hawa Yakubu...The late Theresa Amerley Tagoe selected those of us who are courageous and know our rights. She saw in us that we can do it and she motivated us. She encouraged us to attend meetings and sometimes they gave us transport at other times too nothing. She advised us and sent us to places to attend seminars. Hawa was informing us anytime she attends meetings what she went there to fight for. She was always encouraging us”.

It could be seen that Rita went through some mentoring process even though it was informal. The current study indicates that networking with female political leaders can influence and motivate women to achieve political leadership positions. The female leaders serve as mentors offering on the job training, advice and encouragement to other women. This is in contrast with Pinto's view, cited in Kamau (2010) that, once women occupy political positions they forget the plight of their fellow women.

On the part of Monica, Rose and others, even though they had personal interest they had to be motivated by other family members such as fathers, husbands, and other relatives before they had the courage and conviction to enter politics. Monica stated, “I didn't harbour the ambition of becoming a political leader...My father had to encourage me and after a careful deliberation I took up the challenge”. In the case of Rose it was her husband who was also constituency vice chairman who encouraged her to go into politics. This finding seems to support research conducted by Ross-Sheiff (2009) on correlation between family ties with male political leaders and women gaining political leadership position. According to Ross-Sheiff (2009), family ties with male political leaders have been a major correlate of women gaining the highest position, especially in Asia while generally several women have achieved the highest positions in their countries, even in conservative countries where women's rights are restricted.

Primary motivators such as formal education, intelligence, confidence, tolerance, trustworthiness, and passion to help people were critical to their decisions to venture into political leadership. Primary motivators are formal education and personal qualities that are mostly innate. Concerning the educational background of the twenty female participants, one had no formal education, eleven had basic education, three had secondary education and there were five who had had tertiary education. Those with tertiary education virtually had advantage over their colleagues with low educational background. The women especially most of the assembly women and the party executive had only basic educational background. This seems to support the findings of a study in Bangladesh on women's political empowerment in urban local governance which revealed that women in Bangladesh were lagging behind men in all stages of education (Zaman, 2012).

Low levels of education were a disincentive to their ability to contest for higher political leadership position such as regional women's organizer and a seat in Parliament. According to Hellen, "Being well-educated and intelligent encourage some women to go into politics. Formal education helps women to have confidence in themselves. While in school some females also had the opportunity to be leaders such as class prefect, section leaders; that experience serves as primary motivator to them". Rebecca also said, "A woman's educational level sometimes serves as primary motivator for some political leadership positions. If your educational level is high you can contest for higher positions such as Member of Parliament, regional women organizer". In contrast to this, Tsikata (2011) believes that even though education is important it has never been a barrier to men enjoying high office and influence so it should not also be a barrier for women. Citing

examples, Tsikata argues that, in 1996 the NPP Northern Regional Chairperson was someone who had never been to school. Tsikata explained that there have been examples of women in Ghanaian politics since the anti-colonial struggle who had used their little education to go very far, hence such people have demonstrated that while education is good and useful, the lack of it is not a bar to impressive performance in high office. In Ghana it appears women lag behind men in terms of education in all levels. The researcher is of the view that some years ago there were so many women who had never been to school. For instance, the 2000 Population and Housing Census indicates that 54.3% of females 15 years and above have never been to school (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). That figure reduced to 34.7% for females of that same age group in the 2010 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012) so today education may be a factor impeding a woman's progress in politics.

Besides, Central Region as a hub of education in Ghana obviously positions education highly in the minds and actions of the people and this explains the importance attached to it by the participants. Earlier research found out that women's overall levels of education and labour force participation were closely related with levels of female parliamentary representation (MC Donagh, 2002; Rosenblith, et al., 2006). Contrary to these findings other works have discovered weak and negative correlations between women's education and labour force participation and proportion of women in elective office (Matland, 1998; Moore & Shackman, 1996).

Zaman's (2012) study on women's political empowerment in urban local governance in Bangladesh revealed that the unequal educational status between men and women is contributing negatively to women's involvement in politics. This is apparently

because women often have a fear of not being able to perform all the necessary activities in politics because of their inferior educational background. According to Zaman, low educational status also affects the confidence level of women and denies them access to information from the media which is an important asset for political discourse.

Feedback from family members, friends and political party members especially the executives also had important influence on the primary motivation. Such people through such actions sometimes become sources of encouragement or discouragement. As indicated by Monica, “In 2008 for instance, I was going through crisis during the primaries because the men were domineering and ganged up against me ...sometimes, I had to go and face the executives”. Emelia also said, “I faced strong opposition from the party chairman when I decided to contest in the assembly elections. I did not know what I had done to him. It was another executive member who stood by me and encouraged me to ignore him and I was able to win the election and I am now the assembly woman”. Such encouragement or discouragement can also affect their self-confidence and morale. Receiving encouragement for one’s self-view as a leader boosts self-confidence which increases one’s motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). On the contrary if one is discouraged it affects self-confidence as well as motivation to take on leadership roles (Day, Harrison & Halpin, 2009).

All the participants involved in the study had males as constituency chairpersons (gate keepers). There were 2 Members of Parliament, 1 former District Chief Executive , 10 assembly women of which 2 were constituency women organizers and there were 7 party executive members variously as were constituency treasurers and constituency women’s organizers. Those party executive positions were not ones that could influence

decisions in the party to a large extent. This resonates with Allah Mensah's (2005) study into the trend of women's participation and positions in politics and public offices. The study revealed that the political parties' leadership structure and internal organization do not show any commitment to gender issues in terms of women's inclusion in politics. It also came out that although the number of women in local government level is increasing steadily when it comes to legislative position there has not been much significant change since 1996. Out of the 23 Members of Parliament representing the Central Region, only 5 are women. This is better comparing their number with women's representation in parliament in other regions of Ghana.

Similarly, Kelemen's (2008) study on females, representation in Hungarian Parliament from 1998-2006 found a low percentage of only 10%. According to Kelemen (2008), the review of nomination policies verified the hypothesis that women's low proportion primarily lies in parties' nomination practices and that there is no conscious effort on part of political parties to provide equality for women during elections. In Ghana political parties' electoral practices discourage women to aspire to political leadership. For example, the amount political parties charge contestants for contesting the primaries is so huge that obviously most females are excluded.

Writing on the importance of informal factors for understanding women's low political participation, Cheng and Tavitt (2011) argued that the gender composition of party gatekeeper plays a crucial role in either encouraging or discouraging women candidates to run for office. Using constituency-level data from all parties and candidates in the 2004 and 2006 Canadian national elections, Cheng and Tavitts proposed that women candidates are more likely to be nominated when the gatekeeper—the local party

president—is a woman rather than a man. They present strong and robust results that parties can significantly influence the electoral success of women through informal influence. This current study indicates that although some of the women leaders were opposed by the party chairpersons, the women were focused and persevered to win the election.

5.2 Participants' Perceptions on Leadership

Research question two focused on the perception of the participants on leadership.

Principally, the participants viewed political leadership as organising activities variously to achieve one's vision, interactions with the people to influence them or educating them to achieve one's vision. This is in line with Duodu's (2001) view that leadership is the ability to organize and influence the efforts and resources of a group to achieve organizational goals. Influencing others to achieve their vision as women leaders implies they are confident, competent and understand the context in which they operate. Vision is so powerful, a driving force that keeps leaders very focused. Vision gives meaning to their work. Some participants indicated that as political leaders their vision was to develop their political parties and their communities. For example, Ama acknowledged that leadership has to do with the interaction with the people and educating them. According to Doreen, she could use the political power she had to do so many things for the people she intended to serve. She believed political power gave her respect, power and recognition in the society. We discern a correlation of power and political leadership in Doreen's perception. However, this correlation has become the

bane of politics in Ghana. Despite this, Wildavsky (2006) has argued that political leadership is a special part of social leadership and is related to power.

A leader in the behavioural sense is therefore a person who is able to modify the course of events. Being able to modify the course of events demands an authority that will enable the followers to comply with the leader's decisions in the follower's own will. Leaders affect their followers' attitudes, beliefs, demands and needs; and the followers affect the leader's style, qualities, beliefs and motivations, as they both transform the environment and are reflectively transformed by their own actions (Hay, 2002; Wildavsky, 2006). Even though as women they are using their power to influence people, this is sometimes interpreted differently because of people's cultural orientation. Some people think that women in positions of authority are too aggressive and authoritative.

There were mixed reaction among participants concerning people's perception that women should not be in political leadership positions. Whereas some participants indicated that such perception is outdated, others said women leaders are still facing strong opposition from people especially men and that people generally doubt their competencies. For example, Jane was of the view that "formerly women were suppressed and not allowed to be leaders but today it is not so. What men can do women can do and even do better". Esi on the other hand pointed out that "our cultural background does not permit us to be involved in politics. Some people also think women cannot perform well in such positions". This finding seems to support the liberal feminists' argument that society holds false belief that by nature women are less intellectually and physically capable than men. This view is similar to

Friere's theory of *the Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which indicates how oppression has been justified and overcome through mutual process. Both men and women seem to support the idea that political leadership is an arena for males. Women are therefore considered incompetent.

5.3 Challenges

Research question three was: What challenges confront them in both their aspirations and performance of their leadership roles? Women in political leadership are confronted with challenges that could be financial, cultural, social, etc. Some of them are discussed in the following pages.

5.3a Financial Constraints

Financial constraints were identified by all the participants as the most persistent challenges as they faced difficulties in raising funds. They may get financial assistance from their spouse, fathers, friends, NGO's and other benevolent individuals and groups but such assistance normally have strings attached to them. If rich people want to sponsor a female politician sometimes they may like to exchange the funds with sexual favours or exert control over the women's decision-making. Tsikata (2011) observed that women are not interested in politics because of sexual harassment from potential financiers which means that women in politics are assumed to be engaged in an endless orgy of exchanging sexual favours for money and influence. Since they have their dignity to protect, they are sometimes faced with a dilemma.

Besides, most people prefer sponsoring male politicians than female politicians because they feel it is easier for a man to win a leadership position than a woman. Moreover, there are many men who are incumbent and are unwilling to leave the seat for women. Women in political leadership like their male counterparts need money to provide logistics for their campaign, undertake community projects especially to fulfill their campaign promises and provide for the needs of the people in the community who confide in them anytime they are in difficulties. They also need money to fulfill social responsibilities associated with coming into the limelight as a public figure (e.g. being invited to attend programmes in the community and make donations) and to provide for their family members according to their respective positions. Bari (2005:5) states “Politics is increasingly becoming commercialized. More and more money is needed to participate in politics. Women lack access to and ownership of productive resources, limiting the scope of their political work”. The participants revealed that they face financial constraints and this affects the performance of their roles.

Financial constraints can be a personal issue emanating from the fact that most of the women had lower educational level that does not guarantee good employment for good pay. The background data indicates that there were six teachers, 12 business women having small businesses, one working in a government agency and one who did not state her employment. The women were normally discriminated against when it came to acquisition of loans in Ghana because of the cultural practices and lack of collateral security. Their financial constraints became apparent when some of the participants were visited at home during the field study. Out of the eight participants who were visited at homes, two were staying in old compound homes with so many other people. There was

one participant, Rose, a constituency treasurer who was living in an uncompleted and abandoned house with bushes around it.

A study by Allah-Mensah (2005) revealed that financial problem was the most challenging for women aspirants. In this study Doreen and others articulated the financial challenges of most women in Ghana. Doreen stated, “In Ghana women do not have resources or assets that will help them to succeed. The issue is how can the women get the money to use to get a political position? There are few NGOs who come in to support in terms of logistics – T-shirt, posters, flyers. That is why political leadership is a male-dominated venture. The women will find it difficult in getting loan because most of them do not have collateral security... The men normally have collateral security”.

The participants revealed that they had difficulty in getting sponsors as people prefer sponsoring their male counterparts instead of them. In Africa and Ghana in particular it seems leadership is equated to behaviours common to males. Women can be weighed down by such gender stereotypes: the directive behaviours that people associate with leadership tend to be viewed as not typical or attractive in women (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007). Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) state “it may result in self sealing where women are underrepresented in leadership positions ...” (p.4). Consequently, there are few women who are incumbent. Most of the political leadership positions are being occupied by males and people prefer sponsoring incumbent to be sure the funds used yield the needed returns. Oquaye (2012) believes incumbency is a factor affecting women participation as most incumbents are men and it is often felt that it is safer to field an incumbent and win than to try someone else (female entrant) and lose. This serves as disincentives to females who aspire and venture into political leadership. According to

Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) such biases accumulate and in aggregate can interfere in women's ability to see themselves and be seen by others as leaders.

Some women in the study were mentored by other women, who have continued to support them in the form of advice and funds. For instance Hellen stated, "When I came into politics I met Auntie Frema ...the former MP for Ayewaso Wagon. She advised me and gave me financial support...She helped me physically, financially and spiritually". Other female participants expressed opposing view to this and said there were some women who were envious of their positions and that the saying "women are their own enemies" is true. Rose stated, "... some women are jealous of your position and will not support you. There are few women who are not jealous and do not care". Similarly, Rebecca stated "...Some women also pose problems for other women who want to go into politics. If you are not determined you will not go into politics".

5.3b Double Standards

Another challenge is the double standards that are set for women in political leadership. For instance Hellen stated, "Political leadership is a male dominated job and you should possess qualities such as boldness and assertiveness..." The males have natural tendencies to exhibit aggressiveness and competitiveness as male hormones androgens produce aggressive and competitive behaviour in men and these qualities are seen as good for leadership. Women leaders are expected by some people to exhibit male traits such as being aggressive, assertive and ready to struggle for political power because political leadership over the years has been shaped by the male occupants. At the same time they are expected to exhibit presumably female traits: calm, quiet, shy, easily

influenced etc. According to Heilman and Parks-Stamm (2007), some people also think that women in positions of authority are too aggressive or not aggressive enough, and what appears assertive, self-confident, or entrepreneurial in a man often looks abrasive, arrogant, or self-promoting in a woman. Ama sharing her experience stated, “A woman who is assertive is seen by some as aggressive, if she is firm, she is considered “too known.” However, if she decides to behave as a woman then they will not get the needed support from the people”.

Similarly, women are judged too soft, emotional, and unassertive to make tough decision whilst others think one can come across them as sufficiently authoritative (Eagly & Carly, 2007). The participants have to manage their identities and loyalties in male dominated political arena and this poses a major challenge to them. Most of the women responded boldly that they are in the man’s world and should be able to survive. This outcome is in support of Freire’s (1970) theory of “the pedagogy of the oppressed” which indicates that the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend to become oppressors themselves, or “sub-oppressors”. Their ideal is to be men.

The participants noted that different moral codes are set to govern their behaviour, their access to money, private relationship etc. This constrains their freedom, especially since their male counterparts are free to lead their lives without reference or adherence to those moral codes. Commenting on the challenges confronting women in political leadership, Doreen stated, “... The men have a way of behaving which is accepted. For instance a man who is a parliamentarian can still visit friends and drink with them but if a woman behaves that way it will not be accepted. She would be accused of being a bad influence on society. For instance a woman political leader cannot put people in her car

and visit one spot after the other but it is accepted for the men to do that. Moral standard set are different for men”.

5.3c Traditional and Religious Beliefs

Talking about the challenges that they face, the participants pointed out that traditional and religious beliefs and perceptions do not favour them as leaders. Some traditional and religious beliefs such as women are to be seen and not to be heard, women should be submissive and rely on their husbands in terms of decision making conflict with women’s leadership roles. Traditional and religious beliefs have been around for many years, are integral to the way of life and therefore difficult to change. Besides, human beings by nature resist change. Such beliefs and perceptions have been guided by their history and culture. “Historically, religion has always played a powerful role in shaping cultural patterns, delimiting social roles and ultimately defining the status of women...” (Tamale, 1999: 65). In some religions such as Christianity and Islam females are expected to be subordinate to their male counterparts and as religion is part of the culture of the people they normally adhere to such beliefs. Consequently, men have been occupying leadership positions since time immemorial even though there have been instances where few women have distinguished themselves as leaders. For instance Queen Yaa Asantewa fought against British colonial conquest in the Asante Kingdom. The female prophetess Nehanda of Zimbabwe led her people in resistance to the imperialism of Cecil Rhodes during the late 19th century. Margaret Thatcher, being a strong Prime Minister, was capable of using force to achieve her ends.

Most people still have strong beliefs in the traditional and religious systems to the extent that despite the education on equal rights for all, they still think there are certain things a woman should not do. This is backed by sayings, conventions and customary laws to the extent that they are not taken for granted. Leadership is one of those things that traditionally people think a woman should not do. Longwe and Clarke's (1999) assert that whereas statutory law may give considerable legal equality, customary law is extremely discriminating, often treating women as legal minors who are virtually "owned" by supervising male. The participants pointed out that traditional and religious beliefs and perceptions do not favour them especially when it comes to political leadership. This finding is in line with the liberal feminist claim that women and men are equal but certain restrictions have been placed on women. Liberal feminists, as indicated by the theoretical perspective, believe that there is an unequal power relation between men and women, with men mostly having the upper hand.

It was revealed in this study that some people still believe that women cannot be effective in leadership positions and are expected to look up to men when it comes to decision making. However, a study conducted by Allah-Mensah (2005) indicated that 69.5% of the 1777 respondents were certain that women are equally capable of taking leadership roles or positions just as men. Rebecca, Ama, Hellen and Mary shared their views on this. For instance Mary stated, "Our perception of women is not good. In some communities the men would not take instructions from you because you are a woman. They do not accept the fact that a woman is their leader. Some women also behave in the same way". This affirms the findings from Sossou (2011) in a study conducted to explore Ghanaian women's perception and voices about issues of gender equality in terms of

exercising their political and decision-making rights in connection with political participation and governance in Ghana. The study revealed that women face issues of gender-based power imbalance and discrimination in addition to other structural, cultural and traditional barriers and roadblocks. This seems to support the assertion of Tong (1989) that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that prevent them from succeeding in public activities.

Similarly, Gyimah and Thompson (2008) in their study on women's participation in Nadowli District of Ghana found that female representation between 1988 and 2006 had been low. Just as in the current study, they attributed this to the social structure and its culture. According to Dolphyne (1991), some aspects of African culture such as customs, traditions, and beliefs have over the years, helped to keep women under subjugation, and to make them feel generally inferior to men and therefore incapable of operating at the same level as men in society.

The participants indicated that they had challenges of managing the performance of their household chores as well as their care-giving responsibilities. Out of the 20 female participants, 13 were married whilst four were single. There were 2 widows and one divorcee. Some of the participants had children who were still in their developmental stages and were therefore largely dependent on them. Sharing her experience Hellen stated, "...For instance being a Minister you will be busy, you will have your own programmes and programmes that others have planned for you. You will not have time for your children. You will wake up at dawn and leave home always while your children are still asleep. If you do not get a good house help who can look after your children by the time you come to the realization, the children may be "spoilt". Tamale (1999) in her

study of women in parliamentary politics in Uganda found that gender exerts a significant influence on women's political participation as they are not free from child care responsibilities. It came to light that some of the women leaders by the nature of their leadership positions do not have time to perform domestic activities even though they would have loved to do so. Obviously, the 11 of the female participants had busy work schedules.

Tsikata (2001) believes gender relations pose unequal and discriminatory situation for women. This is exhibited in sexual division of labour, societal arrangements that favour men as they control more resources and the power vested in men to take important decision at all levels of power structure. Tsikata further noted that there are gender ideologies that justify these differences as natural, functional, logical and reasonable.

Similarly, the assessment report written by Mawawa (1999) to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) indicates that the following challenges slowed down the progress of women participation in politics; cultural and traditional barriers; the persistent unequal division of labour and responsibilities within the households. A study conducted by Kelemen (2008) on women MPs' representation in Hungarian Parliament from 1998-2006 reflected a conservative society in which the conservation of traditional gender roles prevented women from taking on public roles. In addition, women are faced with a social environment which makes it more difficult for them to meet the requirement for becoming politicians.

At the focus group discussions some of the assemblymen were of the view that religious views on women's position in the society in terms of leadership should be

maintained. They argued that the Bible for instance talks about a man being the head and not a woman. Some of the assembly men believed men should always be leaders not women. For example John stated, “As Ghanaians our culture and religious beliefs do not support women to be in politics. Frankly speaking, I have that belief that women should not lead. The Bible talks about a man being the head not a woman. In the Bible just a day that a woman took the lead to go and bring food she brought problems and they were sacked from the Garden of Eden. In the Bible they always trace the generation through males”. As observed by Emmet (2001), all mainstream religions have stereotypical roles for men and women where women are perceived as unequal to men. In her discussion of women’s experience of religion, Emmet (2001) analysed the rituals performed for and by men in various religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Traditional religions and found that men are generally valued and empowered by religion in many ways. Women on the other hand do not enjoy such privileges but are, in fact, disempowered by religious structures and practices. Liberal feminists claim that women and men are equal and that certain restrictions have been placed on women. Such restrictions operate under the religion, customary laws and are justified by patriarchy.

Religion may intersect with cultural prohibitions on women’s political activity, forbid them from speaking in public, seeking political office, or attending political meetings (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Tripp, 2001). This study indicates that restrictions have been placed on women considering the cultural and religious beliefs, perceptions and practices, performance of gender roles and moral codes for the sexes. These pose challenges to both women aspirants and those in political leadership.

5.3d Marriage

Another issue that was of concern to the participants was marriage. Marriage as a traditional practice is treasured and desired by most women in Ghana yet they noted that it can serve as a stumbling block to some women in political leadership. The participants noted that some of their husbands opposed the idea that they should become political leaders. Rebecca for instance stated “Marriage can pose a challenge to women in politics. When I was a woman organizer in 1996 my husband did not like me to be in politics so I had to stop. Later when I realized that he was becoming a stumbling block to my political career we had to divorce and now I am back in politics. He was suppressing me and was always preventing me to be in active politics. He was always talking about the money I was using. However, in 2000 he came out that he wants to be a constituency chairman”. Others confirmed that if a husband opposes, it can easily lead to divorce. A related study was conducted in Zambia and Uganda by Ferguson and Katundu in 1994. Ferguson and Katundu (1994) revealed that there are a number of negative reports about women who dared to enter into politics in Zambia. For example, they found that some Zambian women were threatened with divorce and forbidden by their husbands to enter into politics and even in national parliaments. In a similar study conducted in Ghana by Sossou (2011) it was revealed that marital obligations to husbands, children and families are obstacles to their full engagement in politics.

The current study also revealed that although some husbands support their wives who are in political leadership, yet they impose their decisions on them not to interact with the people from the media houses. Sharing her experience, Esi stated “... I had discussion with my husband concerning my desire to be an assembly woman. He

supported me but advised me to be careful with my interactions with the people in order to maintain my dignity and warn me against people from the media houses. I have contrary view about the media because I believe for me to excel in politics they may contribute in selling my ideas to the people but I have to listen to my husband”. According to Sossou (2011) women are taught to be obedient wives and to respect their elders. The women think the media will make them visible to the people, yet as women, they have to listen to their husbands. Structural inequalities that exist in marriage institution and other social relations constitute a challenge to women in political leadership. It could be realized that their husbands still decide for them even though they are political leaders. The women should rather maintain their equality through their actions and choices as suggested by liberal feminism in a peaceful manner.

5.4 Effects of the Challenges on Participants

On the effects of these challenges the participants pointed out that there is lack of appreciation for what they do for their constituents and this dampens their spirit and willingness to make sacrifices to deal with the challenges of the communities. They sometimes feel embarrassed, disappointed and hurt. Women can be weighed down by gender stereotypes: the directive behaviours that people associate with leadership tend to be viewed as not typical or attractive in women (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007).

In answer to the question on how the challenges affect them, Monica stated, “The people may shun your company if you turn down their financial demands. Some may behave as if they do not know you. This may put unnecessary stress on you...” Mary also stated, “I sometimes feel bad and always say that I have handed myself to them to be

insulted. The interest I had before entering into politics is no more there. There are some men who have been working against me because I am a woman”. This finding seems to support that of Sossou (2011) which indicated that women face issues of gender-based power imbalance and discrimination in addition to other structural, cultural and traditional barriers and roadblocks that expose them as inferior and second-class citizens compared with their male counterpart in terms of politics. According to Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) it may result in self sealing where women are underrepresented in leadership positions to validate entrenched system and beliefs that prompt and support men’s bids for leadership which in turn maintain the status quo (p.4).

Despite these negative effects that Monica, Mary and others talked about, it was interesting to note that Doreen feels the challenges have rather had positive effects on her interaction with people. She stated, “With my interaction with people the challenges rather had positive effects on me. I have told the people my problems, what I could do for them and what I can’t do. I made them see me as a genuine person who speaks the truth and tell people what I can do and what I can’t do. It strengthens me and they also realized they have to help me come out...This work is like writing an examination and so you are not expected to get 100% if you get 70% it is sometimes graded A. The bottom line is although such demands may be stressful you have to do your best”.

5.5 Dealing with the Challenges

Research question four was: How do they solve these challenges?

The study revealed that participants adopted various strategies to deal with their challenges. The participants employed interpersonal skills such as acceptance, tolerance,

acquiescence, empathy and cooperative behaviour to manage the problems and challenges they faced. Jane stated “From time to time we had to invite the various stakeholders – seamstresses, market women, students and others to explain to them what was happening. With this the people will understand what is happening”. According to Bari (2005), women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture and society. During the interview the researcher observed that Jane was unhappy that she had not been able to work to her satisfaction. It was clear that Jane and other participants were aware of what they can do to win electorate’s support yet they were handicapped because of resources.

Other participants tolerated the challenges by adjusting their way of life to suit them. According to Esi, “Well, it is frustrating if you send the problems of the community to the assembly and nothing is done to that effect. Well, I do pray about that so that things that are hindering the provision of the things be removed and I continue to ask”. Bowles, Bear and Thompson (2010) assert that most often, women negotiate to overcome disadvantage and unfair treatment. While negotiation is a critical skill for all leaders, it serves a particular important function for women leaders.

Grace recounted: “From time to time, the community leaders call for meetings and invite me. I visit the area on Sundays to interact with the people. I also try to be nice to those I have identified as my enemies. A good leader should accept whatever happens and analyze them to take good action”. To Grace and others interacting with the people from time to time is their priority.

Doreen, Dorinda and Rebecca pointed out that they try to work toward finding amicable solutions to the challenges. Doreen stated “I am frank to my people. With their numerous requests for paying fees and others with the numbers I can’t pay and so I work towards it”. Sometimes, I have to rely on other people’s advice partially to deal with issues”. Doreen and others show empathy towards the people by doing their best to support them. Dorinda also stated, “I met the chiefs and the members of the community and we all agreed to pay a small levy to help with replacement of street light bulbs and to do other things in the community”. Rebecca: The landlords/ ladies association is helping my community so I always rely on them. They have been contributing money for the work in the community. The participants who were able to address the recurring challenges win the support of the electorate.

5.6 Expectations

The participants were asked to state how women can be actively engaged in politics as well as suggest ways of meeting the challenges. The responses can be categorized into five issues namely, economic empowerment and good financial management practices, character building, education and training, harnessing of potentials and finally consultation and lobbying. At the focus group discussions Joseph for example, talked about good financial management practices. He noted that, “the women should learn how to save money because politics is a capital-intensive venture. They need to be moderate in their spending and dressing to let the people feel that they are part of them...”

Mary, Dorinda and others were concerned with character building. According to Mary, “Some women in leadership should work on their character and try to know how to relate with people especially if the people complain about their character” while Dorinda said “Sometimes it is difficult to deal with the chiefs but if we are respectful we will be supported. It depends on character, if one wants to be good leaders”. From the literature character building should not be a problem for women because desirable qualities, such as honesty, morality, compassion, and the capacity to handle social issues, are associated with female gender (Bystrom, Banwart, Kaid & Robertson, 2004).

The participants also advocated formal education and training for women especially those interested in political leadership. James said “Women should be willing to attain appreciable level of formal education, attend seminars, workshops and read, so as to be abreast with the nature of the political terrain”. This finding corroborates Allah-Mensah’s (2005) findings that the solution to these and other problems experienced by women in politics is in education, a development tool for women to equip them for political positions. It is through education that women will build their capacity and competencies to win voters’ support even though some voters may stereotype female candidates. “At the individual level, voters may stereotype female candidates and prefer males; however, these effects will be masked in the aggregate if women candidates hold superior quality ...” (Fulton, 2012: 304). This implies women who appeal to voters are those who stand out in terms of their capabilities and competencies.

According to Ben and Mary for example, consultation and lobbying should be an integral part of women leaders’ life. Ben stated “They should eschew division whether the people are in their party or not, consult and lobby for things that will help them in

their work” Mary’s advice was also on lobbying but to her the women leaders should lobby for the support of the husbands.

These views expressed by the participants indicate that both women who aspire to be in political leadership and those in political leadership should be involved in capacity building to enable them develop their competencies and character. This will enable them to be creative in dealing with their challenges appropriately. “To make it through the primary process, women must be stronger candidates who are willing to endure greater challenges and more challengers...” (Lawless & Pearson, 2008:78). Fardaus (2006) notes women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on discussion of findings of this study. The findings revealed some women are motivated by people to venture into political leadership whilst others are intrinsically motivated to be political leaders. The women face cultural, religious, social, economic and political challenges of some sort. These challenges may impede their progress in political leadership depending on their ability to deal with such challenges appropriately. The next chapter is on the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on summary of findings of the study, conclusion and the recommendations made. The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges confronting women in political leadership and how they deal with such challenges.

6.1 Summary of findings

The study sought the views of participants using interview and focus group discussion sessions. Observation and questionnaire were also used to collect data from participants. I used observation checklist to collect data on the research setting, participants' interaction with people and others whilst questionnaire was on participants' background information such as age, marital status, number of children, educational background, etc.

Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. These are:

1. What factors motivate women to aspire to political leadership?
2. How do such leaders perceive leadership?
3. What challenges confront them in both their aspirations and performance of their leadership roles?
4. How do they solve these challenges?

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using frequency and percentages obtained from SPSS. The data were presented in tables. Data gathered from the interview, observation and the focus group discussion sessions were analysed through

thematic procedure. The researcher observed that all the participants interacted very well with their subordinates, visitors and their colleagues. Fifteen out of the 20 female participants were within the age range of 41-60 years whilst 3 were over 60 years. Two participants were within the age range of 32-40 years. Thirteen of the participants were married whilst 4 were single. There were 2 widows and one divorcee.

With regard to their academic background, 11 completed basic education, 5 had completed tertiary institutions whilst 3 had secondary education. Twelve participants were entrepreneurs managing their small businesses. Six were teachers, one was working with the National Health Insurance Scheme while one did not declare her occupation. Ten participants were assembly women, 7 were political party executive members, two were members of parliament whilst one was a former district chief executive. Eleven had been in their political leadership positions between 1-5 years, 5 had been in that position from 6-10 years whilst 2 had been in their leadership positions for more than ten years.

The findings of the study indicated that majority of the participants developed interest in politics in 1992 with the inception of the fourth republic and democratic rule. There were few of them who started before 1992. The findings also indicated that some of the women started with voluntary work in their communities and later developed interest in politics. There was one participant who started as a representative of the Ghana National Association of Teachers Ladies (GNATLAS) and later developed interest in politics.

The participants gave a number of reasons that motivated them to opt for political leadership. Three patterns of experience emerged. It came to light that some of them entered political leadership because they were intrinsically motivated while other women

were encouraged by people to be in political leadership positions. The last group was of the view that they had personal conviction but others had to encourage them to enter politics. Those who were self-motivated gave reasons such as they ventured into political leadership because of their desire to help humanity, they are well educated and gifted in terms of creating good human relations and lobbying for things in their communities. Some of the participants indicated that although they had the desire, they also thought of what they would be able to do or get when they attain those political leadership positions. In other words, they were interested in the power associated with those positions and the opportunities open to them such as scholarship and sponsorships.

The women leaders who were motivated by others pointed out that there were a number of personalities in Ghana who motivated them either directly or indirectly. Such persons include the late Hawa Yakubu, the late Theresa Amerley Tagoe, Madam Ama Benyiwa Doe, Madam Hannah Tetteh to mention but a few. The participants talked about the fact that some of these women mentored them. It was also revealed that although some of the participants had the desire to enter into political leadership, other people had to motivate them to realise their dreams. This implies that even though they were self-motivated, it was reinforced by others. They believed that although they had the interest for political leadership, they needed to be encouraged that they could participate and function effectively.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that primary motivators for women leaders are formal education and qualities such as intelligence, confidence, humility, tolerance, discipline, sympathy, understanding, trustworthiness and the passion to help people. The women declared that high educational background is a necessity for those who aspired to

higher political leadership positions such as regional women's organizer and Member of Parliament among others. The participants were of the view that these primary motivators may be affected by the feedback that they get from people around them such as family members, friends and political party members especially the executive. They however conceded that if the feedback is negative and the woman is firm and believes in her capabilities, she could face that challenge and be in the leadership position comfortably.

Participants expressed their views on what political leadership is in order to illustrate their perception on the leadership positions they are occupying. It was revealed that the women perceive political leadership as organising the people to achieve their vision or the target set. They see political leadership as an avenue that provides one with the power to enable the person to achieve his or her vision and to implement government policies to bring development to the people.

The findings also revealed that both men and women can be in political leadership. Some participants went further to talk about the personal qualities that a leader should exhibit. However, some of the participants were of the view that no specific criteria can determine who should be in political leadership. They do not believe that personal qualities should be used to determine who should be in political leadership position because such qualities can be learnt. They believe it all depends on the interest of the person concerned. Some of the participants also revealed that although men and women can be in political leadership positions, women can function very well in some positions better than men. They indicated for instance the position of treasurer where women have generally functioned more creditably than men.

The study revealed that even though both men and women in political leadership need money, the women have a bigger challenge with regard to the acquisition of funds than the men. Financial constraints were major challenges that all the women talked about. They expressed their difficulties in acquiring funds to help them in the course of their work. They explained that if rich people want to sponsor a female politician sometimes they may like to exchange the funds with sexual favours or control the women in some of her decisions. Besides, most people prefer sponsoring male politicians rather than female politicians. This is because they feel it is easy for a man to win a political leadership position than a woman. Moreover, there are many men who are incumbent and are unwilling to leave the seat for women. Women in political leadership like their male counterpart need money to provide logistics for their campaign, undertake community projects to fulfill their campaign promises, provide for the needs of the people in the community and to fulfill social responsibilities. They also have to provide their personal needs and that of their family members.

There are some traditional and religious beliefs and perceptions that are in conflict with women's leadership roles. Such beliefs and perceptions have been guided by history, culture and natural tendencies. This study indicates that most people still have strong beliefs in the traditional and religious systems to the extent that despite the education on equal rights for all, they still think women should not meddle in political leadership. They back such beliefs and perceptions with some sayings, conventions and customary laws. The participants were of the view that traditional and religious beliefs and perceptions do not favour them especially when it comes to political leadership. Some people still believe that women cannot be effective in leadership and are expected to look up to men

when it comes to decision making. Others also think that if a woman becomes a leader she will be arrogant and will not respect people especially men. These perceptions normally influence the people's attitudes towards women leaders in the political arena.

Marriage as one of the traditional practices in Ghana was also identified as one of the stumbling blocks to women's advancement in political leadership. Marriage is treasured and it is the desire of most women in Ghana to get married. Some of the women leaders sometimes think that marriage is considered as one of the criteria for someone to be elected as a political leader. Traditionally, married women are supposed to ask permission from their husbands before taking part in any activity in the public domain including political leadership. The participants stated that some of their husbands oppose the idea that they should become political leaders for varied reasons. According to them, some husbands think their wives would use the family resources for politics; some are afraid that their wives would be exposed to other men; others were wary of their wives exposure to insults from their opponents; and disrespect from their wives as a result of their higher positions. These pose as a great challenge to married women in leadership positions.

In addition to this, society's expectations of the duties of married women can sometimes conflict with the roles associated with being a political leader. The married participants noted the importance of properly combining one's domestic activities with politics else they would face accusations of neglecting their children and husbands. Some participants were of the opinion that being able to effectively perform domestic roles is indicative of one's ability to perform leadership roles. In the focus group discussion the married women revealed that when they attend meetings and close very late it affects the

upbringing of their children especially, if their husbands also come home late. It was revealed that their husbands can also create a problem because of their inability to perform their domestic roles if the meetings are too many. It came to light that some of the women leaders by the nature of their leadership positions do not have time to perform gender roles. Single women also encounter some challenges. They were of the view that interacting with married men in the course of their work is challenging as people misinterpret it that they are having sexual affairs with the men. They are sometimes insulted and misconstrued as prostitutes and opportunistic. The men in political leadership do not have this as a challenge.

The participants explained that as political leaders they perform certain roles and responsibilities associated with their political career. Some of the women were of the view that they liaise between the government and the people. They explained the government policies to the people and send the needs of the people in the community to the assembly. They also organise the people, educate them on politics and the need for the people to be active in politics, and they lobby for assistance for their communities.

In the interview sessions, most of the women were of the view that their gender does not affect the performance of their roles as leaders. However, during the focus group discussion sessions it was revealed that the women have both physical and biological limitations to comfortably deal with the difficult terrains they operate in. It was revealed that most of the areas have unmotorable roads hence they need to walk long distances. They normally depend on male party executives and other well wishers to carry out their campaign activities in such areas. The assembly men are able to visit all those places

themselves. It was also revealed that child bearing and child caring sometimes pose a challenge to women leaders who are in their reproductive stage.

The findings of the study indicated that there are double standards set for women in political leadership. Whereas they are expected to exhibit male traits because leadership has been structured around male norms, they are at the same time expected to behave as women. This, in a way, presents a conflicting situation for them. Besides, different moral codes are set for women in political leadership and this restricts them regarding how they lead their lives. Their male counterparts, however, have their freedom to doing what suit them at any time.

It also came out that the participants encounter disagreement from time to time like their male counterparts. Sometimes, disagreement arises within a party because some executive members want their favourite to contest for certain positions. They also pointed out that sometimes if they exhibit courage and work very hard and they stand out, it brings misunderstanding within the party as some males accuse them of being aggressive. This is because the men within the party think the women are doing work meant for them (men) and taking the credit.

The participants also talked about politicization of issues and party politics in the district assemblies. Some of the assembly women were of the view that they are sidelined in the assembly because of their party affiliation. Besides, it is not easy to relate with other assembly men and women from other political parties because people would interpret it differently.

Other challenges confronting the women were insult from people, hatred and envy, black mailing and sabotage. Ghanaian women generally do not like insults,

insinuation and the disturbances that characterize politics in Ghana. Hence, few of them contest for political leadership. The few who are in political leadership, are discouraged because of the stories people fabricate about them. In the focus group discussions it was revealed by the assembly men and women that the insults, castigation and blackmailing are too much. They agreed that although the men who are political leaders are also insulted, the women are insulted more than the men.

Also the participants revealed that the challenges affect them personally; it affects their interactions with people, their work and sometimes their decision to be in politics. Some of them mentioned that sometimes they feel embarrassed if they see some people and the people pretend as if they have not seen them, all because they (the women) could not give such people money to solve their personal problems. Some of the women leaders also stated that they feel disappointed and hurt, especially when the people do not appreciate their efforts. There were few women however, who explained that the challenges had had positive effect on them and they were satisfied. They indicated that they were doing their best for the people.

The participants used interpersonal skills such as acquiescence, tolerance, empathy and cooperative behaviour to manage the problems and challenges. The participants indicated that they were frank to the people and provided some of their needs. They also asserted that sometimes they got some sponsors such as NGOs, benevolent institutions and individuals to help them. Others meet chiefs and the members of the community and urge them to pay levy to provide things in the community. From time to time, they interact with the community leaders and also try to be nice to those identified as “enemies”. Some participants pointed out that they

find it difficult to interact with various groups such as market women, tailors and dressmakers' association members, students and other identifiable groups to inform and educate them on what the assembly is doing for them. Some of them are unable to solve the issues and live with them whilst others find ways to solve them and obtain further mandate and legitimacy as they have been able to turn around their challenges.

The participants revealed that for many women to venture into political leadership and perform well in the Central Region of Ghana there should be economic empowerment and good financial management practices, character building, harnessing of potentials and, consultation and lobbying. They were of the view that the state should set aside some funds to help women. Some of them want to be paid by the assembly. Others indicated that women should learn how to save money because politics is a capital intensive venture. The participants advised that women in leadership should also work on their character and relate well with people especially if complaints about their character come to their notice.

The participants suggested that the people should be educated. They advocated formal education and training for women especially those interested in political leadership as it is one of the ways that can empower them to have confidence in themselves so as to avail themselves for elective positions. They encouraged women to attend seminars, workshops and read to be abreast of the nature of the political terrain.

The participants also urged women who are gifted, intelligent, honest, compassionate, serviceable, dedicated, and humble to contest for political leadership positions. Women leaders were encouraged to be assertive, know the positions they want

and go for them. They have to be sociable because it is the people who voted for them. They advised that women in political leadership should not consider men as their enemies but rather consult them for help if the need be. They should eschew political division and rather consult and lobby for things that will help them in their work. It was also revealed that single women who want to be political leaders should inform their future partners of their future plans and vision to lobby for their support.

6.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study some conclusions have been drawn. Motivation is an integral part of women's participation in political leadership. The study revealed that most of the participants were encouraged and motivated by family members, friends and political party members. Some of these people mentored the women in political leadership. It was revealed that where such people discouraged the women in political leadership it was not easy for them to occupy the position. The study also indicated that there were some women political leaders who were motivated to be in political leadership positions because of what they will get, such as: scholarship, sponsorship, opportunity to lobby for things for their community and good schools for their children.

Women in political leadership articulate a vision with deeply held values to ensure the attainment of their vision. The participants perceive political leadership as organising the people to achieve one's vision. The vision is in line with their political party's ideology and the development of people in the society. They have the vision and before they can accomplish that vision, they have to interact with the people and educate

them on what they should do to help achieve that vision. As political leaders, they set targets and organize the people to help in country's development without considering what others will say to detract their attention. They are focused and work hard to succeed and when the need arises they consult other people who are mature and experienced on some issues to help them.

Financial constraints pose a major challenge to women in political leadership more than the men in political leadership and affect the effectiveness of their leadership roles. Financial constraints were major challenges confronting women in political leadership. In Ghana women do not have access to and control over resources or assets like their male counterparts. Most of the women political leaders involved in this study were self-employed and were managing their small businesses. Hence, decisions that require huge financial commitment present a big challenge to women. They mentioned that sometimes they get financial assistance from their husbands, friends and other benevolent individuals and groups, although such assistance normally had strings attached to them. Besides, most people prefer sponsoring male politicians rather than female politicians. This is because there are many men who are incumbent and there is the likelihood that they stand a chance of winning than sponsoring women. The women find it difficult to secure loans because most of them do not have collateral security. They need money for logistics such as T-shirts, posters, flyers. They also need money to visit opinion leaders and chiefs as well as the electorate. They have to pay fees, register people for the National Health Insurance Scheme, buy school bags, etc. The participants complained that the District Assembly Common Fund does not come regularly and the internally generated fund is also inadequate. Besides, the people in the community are

reluctant to use their money to pay for the street lights and other things in their communities. This makes their work difficult.

A combination of factors such as traditional and religious beliefs and practices, frequent travels especially during campaign time pose a major challenge to women in political leadership. There are some traditional beliefs and perceptions that conflict with women's leadership roles. A number of people still have strong beliefs in the traditional system and still think women should not be involved in political leadership. Some people still believe that women cannot be effective in leadership and are expected to look up to men when it comes to decision making. This perception influences their attitudes towards women leaders in politics. The participants were of the view that some men do not allow women to go into politics as they suppress the women and most of the women just back out. Some women, because of their cultural and religious orientation, also pose problems for other women who want to go into political leadership. Some people think as Ghanaians, our cultural and religious beliefs do not support women to be in leadership. They backed such beliefs with what the Bible says about leadership. The Bible talks about a man being the head and not the woman. It is not easy for women to accomplish their dream of occupying political leadership positions because they are surrounded by men. The findings revealed that women who want to progress politically are discouraged. There is "pull her down" here and there, when women get political leadership positions. The men feel that as men, they should rather occupy the highest position and women should be at the grass roots.

Marriage as a cultural practice is of concern to women in political leadership. Traditionally, married women are expected to ask permission from their husband before

taking part in political leadership. In the absence of the husband they have to obtain permission from their husbands' people. This, in a way, poses a challenge to married women who venture into politics without such approval as their husbands can create problems for them. The respondents stated that some of their husbands oppose the idea that they should become political leaders. When they travel they sometimes leave their children with the elderly ones and other people.

Performance of domestic roles constitutes a challenge to women in leadership especially if they are married and have children. The participants, especially, those married and having children noted that performance of domestic activities also poses a challenge to them. They have to cater for their children despite the busy schedule of some of them. In the focus group discussions the women revealed that sometimes they attend meetings and close very late; those who are married and have children explained that this affects the upbringing of their children especially if their husbands also come home late.

This study postulates that hatred, envy, insult, sabotage and blackmailing that characterized Ghanaian politics serve as disincentive to women in political leadership and can discourage them to opt out of political leadership. The findings revealed that even though the women and the men in political leadership face these challenges, they women bear the brunt of them. The women involved in the study were not happy with the way people in their communities envy them, insult, sabotage and blackmail them. If these negative behaviours are not curbed, it will be difficult to attain the threshold of 30% representation of women in decision making positions in politics as advocated by the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP, 2005).

6.3 Recommendations

In the light of the findings, it is recommended that the government, Corporate bodies, institutions and individuals should help to set aside some funds to assist women who are interested in politics to enable them to obtain the necessary logistics needed for campaign and other political activities. Politics is a capital intensive venture and considering women's disadvantaged positions in society such as unequal inheritance practices, denial of formal education to higher level, biased customary practices and others, women need to be supported to achieve their political dreams.

Government institutions such as National Commission on Civic Education, Electoral Commission, Information Service and others should embark on a nationwide education on the need to stop monetization of Ghanaian politics. The general public need to understand that political leaders would not be able to solve people's personal problems for them; instead they need to work hard to provide conditions that will enable their communities to develop.

The district assemblies should also intensify their revenue mobilization efforts to enable them get adequate funds for the development of the various communities and to sponsor women leaders in the various districts. This will motivate and help the women in their activities.

Party executive members should encourage women to be involved in politics early and network with astute politicians in order to get access to resources that will enable them to succeed in politics. The women should also strive to occupy high political leadership positions to help them get access to the source of resources. Party executive

members should also avoid discrimination against women in their selection processes for candidates to ensure fair political competition.

Government should implement and enforce all existing policies and international conventions and treaties to promote women's rights and gender equality and equity. This will provide a conducive environment for women to exercise their rights, promote equal participation and fair political competition between men and women interested in political leadership.

In addition, opinion leaders and chiefs must show interest in gender issues and champion the course of women. There are some traditional beliefs or norms that need to be discarded and some of the customary laws concerning marriage should be reviewed to reflect the present needs of this generation.

NGOs and the private sector should also work to eliminate all barriers and inequalities in the system to ensure effective participation of women in political leadership. The researcher is of the view that the assertion of liberal feminist theory that women should be provided with the same rights that men already have (Schumaker, Kiel & Heilke, 2000) should be adhered to by all.

Also, NGOs interested in women's political participation need to work with communities to sensitize voters against politics of insult, sabotage, blackmailing and other forms of vilification in order to make politics friendly to women. Various agents of socialization such as parents, teachers, pastors and imams should socialize people to reflect the changing times. Boys and girls should be made to do the household chores and take active part in decision making to prepare both sexes for future leadership roles. By this, the younger generation will learn that boys and girls are equal. Also, women should

negotiate to get other people to help them with domestic chores and child care so that they can have time to invest in politics through training, seminars, participation in political discussions and others.

Besides, women in political leadership should take advantage of the media and always broadcast what they are doing for their communities to enable people know their capabilities and the work that they are doing. This in a way will enlighten the general public on the capabilities of women so as to win their support.

Political parties should organise nationwide mentoring programmes for women and girls to be educated and trained for leadership especially at political level. Even though some NGOs have been organizing mentoring programmes for women and girls it should be institutionalized and extended to benefit many more women and girls to arouse and sustain their interest in politics. Women in political leadership should work hard to become role models themselves to bring other women on board.

There should be attitudinal change among Ghanaians toward women in political leadership and leadership in general. Men and women need to change their negative attitudes such as hatred, insult, sabotage just to mention but a few, towards women in leadership. Women political leaders should be careful not to be swollen headed. Whatever motivated them to go into politics should lead them always. Things that convinced the people to vote for them should always be addressed, maintained and even improved.

Personal factors such as self confidence, self esteem, motivation and ambition to accept challenges are important for women aspiring to be in politics and those already in politics. Women in general should work on these personal factors in order to take their

rightful place in Ghanaian society. Male political leaders should also support the women and give them opportunity to explore so that women can also come out with their gift and talents to help the society.

Government and relevant institutions should intensify training and education of people, especially women. Such training and education should go beyond mere information to include issues on social and gender justice such as inclusiveness, social and gender equality. It is important for all institutions such as state, family and community to respond to women's specific needs to bridge the gap in education, gender division of labour and address negative attitudes towards women in general.

Gender activists, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) interested in gender issues and the general public should hold political parties accountable for their promises concerning gender equity in their manifestos. This will encourage fair representation of the sexes in various political leadership positions.

6.4 Limitations

The study is a qualitative study that used purposive and incidental sampling techniques involving twenty women in political leadership positions in interview sessions. Ten assembly men and six of the women in political leadership interviewed were also involved in focus group discussion sessions to deliberate on the issues that emerged during the interview. The sample size could therefore limit generalizability of the findings. The socioeconomic background, race and ethnicity were not considered in the selection of the sample and this may affect the findings of the study.

Based on the sample size, the qualitative nature of the data and the fact that politics can be very contextual and time-specific, and that what worked in a particular place and time may not be applicable to another place; the findings of this study may not be generalised to other regions. The findings are the experiences of women in political leadership in the Central Region of Ghana.

6.5 Areas for further study

- Even though the researcher selected two districts with patrilineal system of inheritance and two districts with matrilineal inheritance system in the region, power relations between men and women were not explored fully. A study can be conducted to cater for such differences.
- The study can be replicated in other regions of Ghana to obtain comprehensive data on challenges confronting women in politics in Ghana.
- A quantitative study can also be conducted to provide information on women political representation in the various regions in Ghana.
- To ascertain women's contribution in politics there is the need to research into women's participation in politics at the district, regional and national levels.
- A study can also be conducted on opportunities of women's political participation in Ghana to see the need to bring many women on board.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

1. Please, tell me about when your interest in political leadership first began

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. How did you get to this position?:.....

3. Number of years you have been in this position:.....

4. Any other political leadership position that you have held anywhere else.

.....
.....

FACTORS THAT MOTIVATED THE WOMAN TO OPT FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

5. What factors motivated you to opt for political leadership?.....

.....
.....

6. Who has been the main drive behind your political leadership position?:.....

.....

7. How did that person encourage you?.....

8. Any other idea or person that has been a source of motivation to you ?

.....
.....

9. What do you think are the primary motivators for women including yourself to seek political leadership positions?

.....
.....

PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

- 10. What do you understand by political leadership?.....
- 11. Who may be a political leader?.....
- 12. Some people would say that women are not supposed to be in political leadership positions.
What would you say to them?.....
- 13. How does this perception affect the performance of your role as a leader?
.....
.....
- 14. In your opinion would you say that politics as it is in Ghana is attractive to women?
.....
.....

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

- 15. What are the challenges that you face regularly as a woman in political leadership?
.....
.....
- 16. Can you narrate any particular challenge or incidence that has occurred in the performance of your role as a political leader that was challenging?
.....
.....
- 17. What has been your greatest challenge?.....
- 18. What do most people say concerning the attitude of male political leaders towards women in political leadership?.....
- 19. Is that the way you feel too?.....
- 20. Does your gender affect your ability to perform your work?.....
- 21. How does it affect your ability to perform your work?.....

EFFECT OF THE CHALLENGES ON THE WOMEN

- 22. How do these challenges affect you as a leader?.....
- 23. How do these challenges affect the performance of your role as a leader? :.....
- 24. How do these challenges affect your interaction with people generally?.....
.....
- 25. How can these challenges affect your decision to be in that position?.....
- 26. How do you feel about these challenges?
:.....

DEALING WITH THE CHALLENGES

- 27. What do you think is the ideal way of addressing these challenges?
.....
.....
- 28. How do you deal with each of your challenges?.....
- 29. Are you happy with the way you deal with the challenges?.....
- 30. Why do you think that is the best way to handle each of these challenges?.....
.....
- 31. With these challenges what are your expectations in terms of ensuring women political leadership in the Central Region.:.....
- 32. Any suggestion for women in political leadership.:.....

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

1. Some people would say that women are not supposed to be in political leadership positions.
What would you say to them?.....
2. How does this perception affect the performance of your role as a leader?
.....
.....

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

3. What are the challenges that women face regularly as political leaders?
.....
.....
4. Some women in political leadership have raised the following as challenges they face. What are your views on them?
Financial constraints, Sabotage, Blackmailing
Insult Traditional and religious beliefs and perceptions etc.
5. Does women's gender affect their ability to perform their work as political leaders?
6. How does it affect their ability to perform their work as leaders?

DEALING WITH THE CHALLENGES

7. What do you think is the ideal way of addressing these challenges?
.....
.....
8. With these challenges what are your expectations in terms of supporting women in political leadership in the Central Region.:.....
9. Any suggestion for women in political leadership.:.....

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

1. Setting
 - i. Home []
 - ii. Work place []
 - iii. Other setting
(specify).....

 2. Condition of setting
Conducive [] moderate [] not conducive []

 3. Environment
Good [] manageable [] not good []

 4. Facilities available
Good [] manageable [] not good []

 3. Interactions with People
friendly unfriendly
 - i. Subordinate [] []
 - ii. Superior [] []
 - iii. Visitors [] []
 - iv. Other people she works with [] []
 4. Work schedule (political leadership)
 - i. Busy work schedule (all the time) []
 - ii. Specific time in the week/month []
 - iii. Specific time in the day []
- Any other observation:.....

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS

This is an academic research with the aim of examining the challenges facing women in political leadership and how they deal with such challenges. I should be very grateful if you would respond to these questions. All information provided will be treated as confidential.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING PARTICIPANTS

1. Age
2. Marital status
 - Married []
 - Single []
 - Divorced []
 - Separated []
 - Any other (specify) []
3. Do you have children? Yes [] No []
4. If yes how many are they?
 - 1 [] 2 []
 - 3 [] 4 []
 - 5 [] 6 []
 - 7 and above []
5. Highest Educational Level Attained
 1. No Formal Education []
 2. Basic Education []
 3. Secondary Education []
 4. Tertiary Education []
6. Occupation
 1. Teaching []
 2. Nursing []
 3. Businesswoman []
 4. Government Agency []

5. Any other occupation, please specify.....

7. Current political leadership position

Assembly Woman []

Party Executive Member []

District Chief Executive []

Member of Parliament []

Deputy Minister []

Member of Council of State []

8. Former political leadership position if any

9. Number of years in such a position

Less than 1 year []

1 – 5 years []

6 – 10 years []



APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ASSEMBLY MEN

This is an academic research with the aim of examining the challenges facing women in political leadership and how they deal with such challenges. I should be very grateful if you would respond to these questions. All information provided will be treated as confidential.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING PARTICIPANTS

1. Age
2. Marital status
 - Married []
 - Single []
 - Divorced []
 - Separated []
 - Any other (specify) []
3. Highest Educational Level Attained
 1. No Formal Education []
 2. Basic Education []
 3. Secondary Education []
 4. Tertiary Education []
4. Occupation
 1. Teaching []
 2. Nursing []
 3. Businesswoman []
 4. Government Agency []
 5. Any other occupation, please specify.....

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SESSION 1



APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SESSION 2



APPENDIX H



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA	DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION
P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana. Tel. (03321) 91840 Email: socialstudies@uew.edu.gh	

9th January,

2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. LUCY EFFEH ATTOM
(9110140008)**

We write to introduce Ms. Lucy Effeh Attom to your outfit. She is a Ph.D. Social Studies student from the above named Department.

She is undertaking a research on the topic “*Challenges Confronting Women in Political Leadership in Central Region of Ghana*”.

The data for the research would be collected through documents, questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussion sessions.

We would be grateful if she could be offered any courtesies she may need to enable her work on her thesis.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Abbam
for: Head of Department

