

THE CONCEPT OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY: AN ALTERNATE EXPLANATION FOR POOR VOTER TURNOUT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS USING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM TECHIMAN MUNICIPALITY, GHANA

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ABSTRACT

In Ghana, decentralization was properly instituted in 1988 to promote participatory democracy and to enhance service delivery. However, for almost 26 years of its practice, the concept has not effectively achieved these objectives. Most people tend to be indifferent making voter turnout in local elections very low. This study sought to explore an alternate approach for explaining this phenomenon of poor voter turnout by examining the effect of administrative responsibility of district assemblies on citizens' participation in local elections using the case of Techiman Municipality (TMA) in Ghana. A case study design within the qualitative research paradigm was adopted. Multi-stage sampling involving purposive, cluster and simple random techniques were employed for the study. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were the instruments of primary data collection. The study found out that TMA has not institutionalized appropriate mechanisms to ensure regular interaction with its constituents and has not also resourced assembly members to regularly interact with their respective electoral areas. The study reveals that turnout in rural electoral areas is higher than those of urban and peri-urban areas. The study concludes that the character of a district assembly and that of respective electoral areas do have effect on the attitude and posture of rational voters. The study recommends all district assemblies (MMDAs) to institutionalize (localize) mechanisms to oblige and resource MMDA members to adopt the concept of administrative responsibility.

Keywords: Administrative responsibility, Responsiveness, Participation, Local government elections

1. Introduction

Decentralization and Local Government Systems are established to enhance popular participation in the governance processes. Though there are various forms of participation, elections happen to be the most manifest way of popular participation. Yet, it appears that citizens are gradually losing interest in Local Government Elections which remains a blow to the concept of decentralization. Ghana is not spared from this global wave of apathy; what seems more problematic about her case is the fact that she has an elaborate decentralization policy which is pillared on ensuring grassroots participation and popular empowerment; yet it appears the people have exhibited a decline of interest in assembly affairs which is evidenced by falling electoral turnout in the district level elections (Amponsah, 2006; Debrah, 2003; Ayee, 2008; 1996; p. 35).

Decentralization in Ghana was to offer a platform to make governance closer to the local people and to really determine and participate in the development process of their communities. With high enthusiasm, the early years of 1988 witnessed a massive turnout in local elections because the people really wanted to be involved in the selection of their leaders who would champion and foster local engagement, responsiveness and development. The people were promised that such a system would ensure ‘power to the people’, the system would be more accountable and responsive to them; for that reason, virtually all decisions or actions and inactions would emanate from the people leading to tailor-made services and development (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2008). The earlier enthusiasm by the people seems to be diminishing with each passing year; and the brighter initial promises and anticipations have not been fully realized by the people. This illusion could be a possible cause of frustration among the electorates which leads to a persistent display of apathy and poor attitude towards the district level elections.

James (2007) posited that “managing expectations, as well as perceived performance, may be an effective strategy for local authorities to raise satisfaction...” (p.1). He proposed the need to maximize citizen satisfaction by lowering the expectations of constituents else they are less likely to be content or satisfied with the performance of the local government service delivery. He put it succinctly that “a strategy of lowering expectations might be especially attractive to local authorities as a way of avoiding blame, in the sense of avoiding dissatisfaction associated with the disappointment of expected standards of performance not being met... Strategies to lower expectations could include explaining to local publics about difficulties in service

provision such as problematic socioeconomic conditions or budget and other constraints imposed by outside actors such as central government” (James, 2007, p. 13). This point has been observed by Hiskey and Seligson (2003) that “citizen perceptions of the quality of local government services, is a factor that is a strong determinant of system support levels; those citizens with more positive views of local government services had higher levels of system support than those who viewed the quality of local government services as poor” (p. 84).

The literature has addressed the phenomenon of low citizen participation and poor voter attitude from the elitist perspective which basically attributes poor participation in local electoral process to an external cause which Amponsah (2006) refers to as “social constructionism”. Such perspective argues that the activities of the Electoral Commission (EC), media, National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and other key stakeholders seem more interested in national elections and do not pay much attention to the district level elections (DLE). They have tended to argue that poor participation in DLE emanates from the lackadaisical activities of such institutions who view DLE as ‘low politics’.

This study, however, sought to investigate the phenomenon of poor attitude towards district level election and low participation with an introspective approach. This approach seeks to ascertain how administrative responsibility of the Assemblies and assembly members themselves affect citizen participation in the local electoral process. In other words, the perspective argues that, to a greater extent, the phenomenon of poor participation in local elections emanates from the internal processes and mechanisms of the District Assemblies (DAs) and the Assembly members. Administrative responsibility is defined as the ability of the District Assembly (DA) or DA members to forge closer relationship with their constituents through the provision of effective, flexible and responsive services to them; being accountable to the electorates through constant provision of information; as well as effective citizen engagement and interaction. The study was underpinned by the following key themes or objectives: Assembly’s Engagement and Interaction with Electorates in Decision Making; Accountability of the Assembly to Electorates; Performance of the Assembly and the Responsiveness of the Assembly to the People. The paper has been organized into five main sections. Section one provides a background to the study whilst the second section reviews relevant literature and concepts employed for the study.

Chapter three also discusses the methods and procedures used for the study whilst four presents findings and discussions. The last section provides conclusions and recommendations.

2 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Rational Choice Voter Model

Most analysis of voter behavior has centered on the rational choice voter model (Clarke *et al.*, 2004; Franklin, 2004; Riker & Ordeshook, 1968). The argument is that voting is a very costly activity in both objective and the opportunity cost; voters have competing demands on the alternative use of their time and money. For using my resources (time and money) to cast a ballot, am I going to get the best of utility? Am I making the best of choices? Will my vote help? Matsusaka (1995) clearly summarizes the rational choice voter model using the position of Riker and Ordeshook (1968) that the rational voter would vote when the expected benefit of swinging the election as well as consumption benefit to voting outweigh the cost of voting. The argument suggests that voters calculate the benefits they are likely to obtain from their participation in election and compare it to the cost of the voting, the former must outweigh the latter before individuals are convinced to vote. The author argued that in order for the rational voter model to be effective and complete, information plays a key role in the entire rational decision making process and therefore proposed an information theory.

The rational choice theory has been used in the literature of politics and is usually referred to as social or public choice. For the purpose of this study, public choice and rational choice are used synonymously. Public choice theory borrows the basic assumptions of neoclassical economics about the nature of human rationality and applies them to the explanation and prediction of behavior in the political domain (Downs, 1957). Public choice adherents tend to make some assumptions that governmental agencies are inefficient that public employees tend to be primarily concerned with enhancing their own job security and with increasing their agencies' budgets and scope of authority (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962; Downs, 1966). Hovenkamp makes some useful suggestions to relate the public choice theory to voting attitude of electorates. Two of such arguments have been adopted for discussions here. The author suggests that when it comes to elections, information about political choices and about candidates' records is readily

available (p. 100). He again argues that “there is no reason for assuming that people act intelligently in their self-interest when they purchase, but ignorantly or irrationally when they vote” (p. 100).

The rational choice voter model has been adopted for the study because Ghana’s decentralization system was premised on some assumptions and premises; it is ideal that individual community members or electorate would align to the system to reap such promises. Election or participating in the local election requires voters to spend enough time and other resources; therefore, the individual is likely to ask himself whether or not such election would yield him any value. This point has forcefully been brought home by Ahwoi (2010) that “invariably, before the citizen decides to vote in a local government election or to pay tax or local rates to a local government, he asks himself the question, what can the local government do for me?, if the answer is ‘nothing’ or ‘can’t tell’, that is the beginning of the problem of apathy” (p. 248)

2.2 Concept of Administrative Responsibility

Notwithstanding its definitional complexity, scholars observe that administrative responsibility is *sine qua non* for efficiency and productivity of administrations. Finer (1959) rates responsibility above efficiency and provides two definitions of administrative responsibility. His first argument is that “responsibility means that X is accountable for Y to Z” (p. 336). This definition borders on the principal-agent relationship where the latter acts on behalf of the former and that the principal has ultimate responsibility over the role of the agent.

Following from the definition above, local elected officials or administrators hold the mandate of the citizenry in trust, and as part of the contractual arrangement ought to get the electorate informed and involved on regular basis. Based on such information and citizen engagement, the principal would make a decision whether to perpetuate, abrogate, or alter the terms of the contract. This form of administrative responsibility has recently been noted by Denhardt et al. (2009) to be known as objective responsibility. He observed that Finer (1972, p. 8) has argued that there is the need to establish strict legislative instruments that would hold public officials responsible and accountable to their constituents.

Finer (1959) further discussed the concept of administrative responsibility as the “inward personal sense of moral obligation” of the agent or administrator (p.336). This perspective sees responsibility as an offer from the magnanimity of the official or administrator. In this sense, what is described ‘responsible’ comes from the moral conscience or benevolence of the agent and there are little or no terms of reference that urge him to surrender to the principal. Denhardt *et al.* (2009) discuss the argument put forward by Friedrich (1972) which calls for the intensification of ethics and civic culture among students and practitioners of public administration so that they would have the moral obligation to render themselves responsible and accountable to the people. They call this form of responsibility that emanate from the conscience of the power holder as subjective responsibility.

Contextualizing Finer’s second definition to this study, the use of ‘moral obligation’ here implies that, the assembly members must be able to be guided by their conscience and should have the courage to stand boldly to ensure that their actions reflect the needs and demands of the constituents. The assembly as well as its members must not unduly be accomplices of the central government to swallow hook, line and sinker all ‘orders’ from above even if against the wishes of their electorates. Finer’s second definition is a wake-up call on Assemblies to be responsive and flexible to their constituents and their demands whilst his first definition calls for the institutionalization of more structures that would render the assembly grassroots-friendly.

Cendon (1999) observed that the use of administrative responsibility in the public administration literature has connoted three different meanings. He observed that a cursory view of the concept connotes ‘capacity’, ‘accountability’ and ‘liability’. He explained capacity to mean the ability of officials to act within the framework of rules and regulations that define the duties and functions of the office. When used as accountability, Cendon observes that it is the obligation of officials to provide information, explanations and justifications for their actions and inactions. Responsibility as ‘liability’ is the process whereby the official assumes the consequences of his actions or that of others if ultimate responsibility lies within his office. He argued that these three perspectives are closely related and go hand in hand. He puts it succinctly that; “in fact, for an administrative official to be able to give account for his/her performance-responsibility as accountability-, he/she must be competent or invested with authority on the subject matter-

responsibility as capacity-and he/she may be considered liable for the action or omission that took place and its effect or consequences- responsibility as liability” (p. 26). According to Cendon, there is a linkage between these three canons and a flaw in one of them would necessarily affect the other.

Gilbert (1959) observed that there are about twelve key indices that are mostly used in the literature of administrative responsibility. He posited that the concept is loosely defined in the literature as comprising of myriads of canons. The indicators of administrative responsibility involves: responsiveness, flexibility, consistency, stability, leadership and probity. Others include; candor, competence, efficacy, prudence, due process and accountability. On the whole, a system or local assembly that exhibits these features or indicators could be described as a responsible or accountable local assembly. He, however, indicated that a combination of all these indicators may at times pose challenges to administrators because some seem to contradict others.

A critical review of these indicators points to the fact that; administrative responsibility is all about an efficient, capable and responsive system that is managed by visionary leaders who act accordingly and eventually submit themselves for public scrutiny *ex ante* and *ex post*.

A further analysis of these twelve canons could subsume the concept of administrative responsibility into two key components:

1. A capable administration that performs effectively to achieve high performance to the satisfaction of the electorate or constituents; in this sense “ better service delivery”
2. Accountability to the electorate for all actions and inactions. The ability of a system to exhibit these two qualities would encourage its citizens to feel part of the system and would be enthusiastic to participate in any agenda the system asks them to.

For the purpose of this study, administrative responsibility refers to the ability of a system to exhibit a high sense of efficiency in the utilization of resources, a system that encourages regular interaction with its stakeholders and constituents to take demands that it could well address

independently as well as providing regular information about how resources are utilized. A cursory view of the operational definition adopted for this study rests on three main variables: a capable local government, which is responsive and accountable to the electorate in addressing their pressing needs without any external or central government pressures; and in the end, providing the relevant information and communication necessary to make their activities transparent.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a case study design within the qualitative research paradigm. The study made use of both secondary and primary data. By secondary data, the researcher made use of local electoral results of the Techiman Municipality from 1998 to 2010 to ascertain the trend of participation. Since the Fourth Republic of 1992, there have been five different district level elections which were first run in 1994, through 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2010. Therefore, the electoral results enabled the researcher to find out the general pattern of citizen participation and contextual variations. Such analysis enabled the researcher to observe a participation trend or pattern which informed the questions being asked during the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Again, the Medium Term Development Plan of the municipality (2010-2013) as well as assembly reports was adequately used and perused.

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. This technique enabled the researcher to combine the purposive, cluster and simple random techniques to select respondents from urban, peri-urban and rural electoral areas. The cluster technique enabled the researcher to designate the entire electoral areas into three; urban, peri-urban and rural based on a document containing a profile of the Assembly. In all, a total of thirty-seven (37) respondents were selected from the study population to be interviewed individually and in groups. The distribution was as follows: twelve (12) assembly members were selected; four each from rural, urban and peri-urban electoral areas. This was to get a perspective from each of these clusters; the various means with which these assembly members ensure accountability and responsiveness to their communities as well as the constraints. Furthermore, two respondents were purposively selected from civil society organizations (CSOs) whilst one informant chosen from a media station that operate in the municipality. Lastly, the researcher through the cluster and random sampling techniques

selected fifteen (15) registered voters to be interviewed in various groups and individually. This sample was very crucial and linchpin of the study; because first batch of data obtained from the office of the municipal electoral commission indicated variations in turnout patterns for the electoral areas in the urban, peri urban and rural areas. There was, therefore, the need to find out why such variations existed.

4. Results and Discussions

This section provides and discusses the findings obtained from the study. It first presents the local electoral turnout for the Techiman Municipality from 1998 to 2010 and further provides a contextual variation in turnout between urban, peri-urban and rural electoral areas. The section further discusses the findings along four key themes of the study namely: Assembly's Engagement and Interaction with Electorates in Decision Making; Accountability of the Assembly to Electorates; Performance of the Assembly; Responsiveness of the Assembly to the People. In the course of the analysis and discussions, direct quotations from participants have occasionally been used to show emphasis on the responses given.

Table 4.1.1 Local election Voter Turnout in Techiman from 1998 to 2010

YEAR	REGISTERED VOTERS	TOTAL VOTES CAST	PERCENTAGE TURNOUT	VOTERS WHO DID NOT VOTE	PERCENTAGE OF NON-VOTERS
1998	83,236	31,873	38.3%	51,363	61.7%
2002	96,278	32,919	34.2%	63,359	65.8%
2006	105,322	46,959	44.6%	58,359	55.4%
2010	134,296	46,651	34.7%	87,645	65.3%

Source: Constructed from data from Techiman Municipal Electoral Commission

Table 4.1.2 variation in voter turnout between urban, peri-urban and rural electoral areas for 2010 District level elections

Electoral area	Designation	Total registered voters	Total number of votes cast	Percentage turnout	Percentage of non-voters
Tunsuase	Urban	2700	369	13.67	86.33
New Tunsuase	Urban	5332	874	16.39	83.61
Abanim	Urban	3773	915	24.25	75.75
New Dwomor	Urban	5740	1108	19.30	80.7
Ahenboronoso	Urban	3515	1026	29.19	70.81
Dagombaline	Peri Urban	5119	1017	19.87	80.13
Wangaraline	Peri Urban	4337	1404	32.37	67.63.
Kenten	Peri Urban	5502	1184	21.52	78.48
Konimase	Peri Urban	6890	2081	30.20	69.8
Forikrom	Rural	2003	1335	66.65	33.35
Fiaso	Rural	1525	1034	67.80	32.2
Amangoase	Rural	1890	812	42.96	57.04
Kuntunso/Bomire	Rural	1450	820	56.55	43.45
Asubrofo	Rural	761	314	41.26	58.74
Akisimasu/Ebomso	Rural	1219	488	40.03	59.9

Source: Constructed from data from Techiman Municipal Electoral Office

The tables above suggest that local electoral turnout in the Techiman municipality appears low since 1998 but a further contextual analysis suggests that electoral areas in the rural settings or communities have been recording or chalking relatively higher turnouts unlike their urban and peri-urban counterparts. One would have expected that urban areas have high exposure to the media, National Commission for Civic Education and would therefore vote more. Paradoxically, the rural areas which have less access to these tend to record higher percentages. The next subsection provides explanation for the poor voter turnout and the paradox.

4.1 Assembly's Engagement and Interaction with Electorates in Decision Making

This objective sought to find out the extent to which the Assembly involves the electorate in the pre and post district election periods. It also sought to ascertain the extent to which the Assembly members for the various electoral areas involve their communities and electorates in decision making processes and other activities. The argument is that the process of decentralization is a continuum and the electorate must be involved in major decision making so that when it gets to the election period, they will feel obliged and morally bound to participate in such process too as

they routinely do. The researcher, therefore, sought to find out whether or not the assembly as well as the assembly members values the electorate or other stakeholders in their day-to-day Assembly deliberations or decision making processes.

Respondents were asked the various ways by which the Assembly and its members involve the electorate in decision making and the extent to which the various associations were consulted on major issues and the institutionalized mechanisms to realize sections(16)(18) of the Local Government Act, Act 462. All four officials of the Assembly selected for the study answered in the affirmative that the Assembly is doing what it could to involve the people in their day-to-day activities. However, the remaining 33 respondents argued that the process has not been the best; out of this, 11 of them suggested that the Assembly is rather relenting on its efforts or retrogressing. Officials of the assembly appeared to be hiding under the laws to answer the questions meanwhile almost all their responses were ‘futuristic’; they appeared to use the Legislative Instruments (LIs) to respond rather than what they were practicing or actually doing on the ground. This was what one of the respondents said:

“There is the need to consult as enshrined in the National Development Planning Systems Act and the planning takes place at various levels...however, logistical and time constraints usually hinder the ability to consult broadly and some of the stages may suffer hugely”.

*“Townhall meeting is supposed to be mandatory at 1st and 3rd Quarters to inform us towards the preparation of budget, that is for planning, budgeting and rating. However the season or timing of the meeting would determine the number of people who attend”
(an official from TMA)*

Even though the Assembly is aware of this, they hardly practice it; the only evidence of participation they showed me indicated that such meeting was organized on Friday which is the major market day of the people of Techiman thereby recording a very poor attendance.

The level of rapport or citizen engagement and interaction from the study appeared not quite impressive and appears most of the things done in the community are ‘top-down’ and the community members or people are mostly at the recipient point.

The literature has, however, warned that citizen involvement and engagement ought to be a conscious and systematic process and must not be mixed with pretence and mischief (Arnstein,

2011). He argues that some forms of participation are indeed an illusion and could best be described as ‘non participation’ (ibid). This finding is also in line with what Saxena (2011) observed in India that in their quest to promote participation, most officials merely use the public as rubber stamp to agree on decisions already taken behind their backs; and the people do not necessarily have any influence on what goes into the decisions and policies affecting them.

One principal officer of the Techiman Municipal Assembly had this to say:

“There is relatively good rapport because at sod cutting and inauguration we do meet the people and they witness the process”.

Again, it was observed from the field study that the municipality has not made use of modern technology to have a broad based interaction with its electorates; the concept of E-Governance in terms of using social media and other electronic media or modern Information Communication Technology (ICT) to reach out to the electorate or community has not been tapped into and remains a gray area for the Assembly. The Assembly as an entity does not have an e-mail address or website where it can communicate information and also receive feedback from its stakeholders which will increase the electorates’ confidence and sense of attachment to the Assembly and its programs or activities. Respondents argued that there are little avenues for them to interact with the Assembly; a follow up question was asked whether such tendency could affect their participation in the district level election. The response to this question was affirmative and this explains the average poor participation in the district level elections of the Municipality (see Table 4.1.1)

Responses from a focus group discussion with five Assembly members from urban and peri-urban areas have emphasized the point made above that the level of interaction between Assembly members and their constituents has been very minimal. They also reiterated that meetings with their community members and electorates are at their own discretion because it involves money and other resources which must be raised by the assembly member in question. They are not given any allowance or budget to organize any meeting with any one even though the law requires them to meet their communities. They argued that most members do not consult or provide any information to their electorate. The responses indicated that perhaps the most visible period where the Assembly engages the people are when there is going to be an inauguration of project in a given area.

It was also found out that the Assembly has not clearly institutionalized any means of ensuring that Assembly Members interact or engage their constituents in information sharing or deliberations. Responses from some informants are quoted.

“We organize community meetings at our own discretion; this is because it involves finance and such moneys have to come from our own pocket”.

“Who will hire the PA system for you? Or who will buy water for the people? Who would go to Asta FM or Adepa to announce for you?”

“We are not given any pay or any allowance to organize community meetings. Even at our normal assembly meeting our allowances have not been paid for a very long time”.

An interaction with Techiman Civic Union which is the umbrella unit consisting of all 96 civil society organizations in the municipality corroborated the point above, the chairman argued that the assembly at times teams up with them to move from community to community to meet the people but attendance has not been good. The chairman also observed that previously the level of interaction and engagement was quite significant because the assembly used to involve the Civic Union in budget hearing, fee fixing; at first the planning officer used to invite the other CSOs but the level of such interactions has reduced. This point seems to confirm what the honorable assembly members and that of the Ahenboronoso Care International had previously posited.

This same position was held by almost all respondents who argued that the rapport has not been the best and sometimes the assembly members themselves seem sidelined. One assembly member for New Dwomor Electoral area argued that in his electoral area there was a sod-cutting for a bore-hole project and he was not aware, it took a friend to call him on phone to inform him that there was a fanfare in his electoral area and asked why he was not in attendance or present. If things of this nature happen, they give a wrong signal to the electorate that the assembly member is not even in charge and perhaps his position is not significant; with him or without him, they could still move on as an area.

Throughout the study, it appeared unanimous that the level with which the assembly or assembly members engage with or interact with the constituents has not been the best; some assembly members and even chiefs at times cried foul of not been consulted on some issues. This observation is very true since it confirms some of the challenges identified in the municipality's Medium Term Development Program (2010-2013). Among other things, for the challenges faced

in the GPRS II and implication for MTDP(2010-2013) the document argues that the “non-involvement of the communities and CSOs in the plan implementation tends to affect the commitment of the communities in ensuring sustainability of the projects as they may continually regard and treat them as Assembly projects. Efforts should, therefore, be made to involve beneficiary communities and other key stakeholders in all aspects of the project cycle, especially during implementation. This will also ensure social accountability” (p.28)

It was also observed that there is no blueprint or laid down procedures to institutionalize their programs. The Assembly, therefore, goes back and forth and at times retrogresses on some of the gains made. Some respondents argued that in the times past townhall meetings were organized whilst the civic unions were also made active and consulted in most occasions but now appears deteriorated. The Techiman Municipal Assembly is not making efforts to institutionalize these provisions. Assembly Members are also not motivated or resourced to carry out these important legal obligations to the people. This finding corroborates a study by Ayee (1999) that the allocations of 86 functions to DAs and assembly members by the 1992 Constitution and Local Government Act has not been matched with the corresponding resources. However, the Local Government Act, Act 462 Section (16) obliges the DAs as well as assembly members to constantly maintain a closer contact with their communities, and to consult the people of the electoral areas on issues to be discussed and to collate their views, opinions and proposals. Section (18) provides that the DA shall meet at least three times a year whilst (16d) provides that the assembly members must meet their electorate before each meeting of the Assembly. It has been noted by Ahwoi (2010) that apathy is induced when local governments are not adequately allowed or resourced to perform the functions for which they have been established; he therefore directed that “if the problem of apathy in the local government system is to be resolved, the local government units should be enabled to perform the functions assigned to them by law” (p. 257).

Finally, the study observed that there is vast disparity in the level of interaction between urban and rural assembly members and their electorates. Throughout the study, all respondents used an operational word “some”; they argued that some of the assembly members ensure citizen involvement and interaction. Almost all informants argued that some assembly members interact with their communities and electorates and upon follow up questions, their arguments suggest

Honorable assembly members in the rural communities use media such as funeral grounds, churches and through their chief's *gong gong* to summon and interact with their people.

Some responses from a CSO put it succinctly as follows:

“If there should be a rapport between the Assembly member and the people, it behoves the kind of electoral area”

“Hon. Members who are from the villages and smaller communities where there are community radio and information centres, such media are used to involve the community in decision making and to relay information to them. Also through their chiefs, the gong gong may be used to summon the people to meet at a place”.

However, urban and peri-urban Assembly members appear to argue that organizing such interactive processes involves some financial commitments which the Assembly is not willing to pay and they cannot afford. Meanwhile, because the assembly has not obliged them or given them some specific periods to meet their electorates they are not also doing such thing.

It was found out that the disparity in the ways assembly members from urban and rural areas interacted with the people has an effect on the attitude and perception of their electorates. The various electorates have got a different perception of their assembly members and these have an effect on the rational voter's decision to vote. A focus group discussion with electorates from the urban and peri-urban electoral areas revealed that the electorates are far removed from their assembly members and by that alone they will not vote and have even regretted ever voting in the Assembly election. (See Table 4.1.2 for voting pattern of urban, peri urban and rural electorates)

4.2 Accountability of the Assembly to Electorates

This objective sought to examine the direction of the Assembly's accountability and how the processes of the Assembly ensure accountability to the people and not any external body.

The various questions posed to respondents bothered on the selection criteria of the MCE as well as the 30 per cent appointed members of the Assembly and its effect on local accountability. Respondents were again asked the extent to which they were given information from the Assembly or their respective assembly members.

All respondents argued that the current selection criteria of the MMDCEs promote vertical accountability and it ties the hands of the appointed MCE to the hands of the central government precisely the President who is the appointing body. First and foremost, the appointed individual owes an allegiance to the President. Therefore, the “first gentleman” of the Assembly who wields the symbol of authority is accountable to an “external party” yet the electorates are told to go and form queues to elect assembly members as though the assembly members will be accountable to the local people. In a local parlance, it is often said that once you cut the head of the snake the remaining part is nothing but a mere rope. One informant had this to say:

“Final determination of assembly deliberations may not hold unless it is approved by the chief executive who is an appointed individual”

Another dimension of this objective was to find out the rationale of the 30 per cent government appointees and how such arrangement affects local accountability. As per Article 240 of the 1992 Constitution, these members of the Assembly are selected based on some level of competence or expertise to ensure the effectiveness of the Assemblies. These individuals perhaps by their expertise were to check the excesses of the MCE. Could the argument still be competence/merit or convenience/political? The figure below is a list of selected government appointees for Techiman South.

Table 4.2.1 list of government appointees for Techiman South Constituency and their vital statistics (2010-2014)

No.	NAME	SEX	AGE	ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	PROFESSION
1	A	M	50	A4 Yr	Teaching
2	B	M	48	School Cert	Businessman
3	C	M	40	School Cert	Businessman
4	D	M	38	Diploma	Teaching
5	E	M	36	Advanced Diploma	Carpentry
6	F	M	45	MSLC	Motor Mechanic
7	G	M	50	Dip Basic Edu	Teaching
8	H	M	50	S/C	Imam
9	I	F	50	MSLC	Farming
10	J	F	45	School Cert	Trading
11	K	F	50	MSLC	Trading
12	L	F	42	S/C	Trading

Source: Techiman Municipal Assembly. (For ethical reasons, names of these members have been withheld; instead, they are represented by variables).

The study area is a municipality with different categories of people and professions (see profile of study area), the list of appointees ought to reflect these diverse groups. This list cannot be justified to be the only people with competence; interviews and focus group discussions with respondents revealed that most of the individuals above are not competent enough to pass the competence test or criterion.

Throughout the study, it was unanimous that the 30 per cent government appointees to the Assembly have outlived its usefulness and now appear very obsolete. Informants complained that at first the selection criteria was based on qualification and experience to complement the competence and expertise of the Assembly but currently it is driven by partisan political interest. It is an attempt to cushion the MCE and the President's influence in the Assembly. This thesis does not want to suggest that competence of an individual resides merely in academic qualification, but the study area is municipality which has a mixture of all categories of people and professionals. The list of appointees above does not truly reflect the profile of the study area and the responses obtained from informants attest to this.

A key civil servant of the assembly put it out succinctly that:

“The main rationale of the 30% appointees was good at first but over time, the focus has shifted from competence to a mechanism for getting two-third approval of the MCE. The focus now is to get a one-third to neutralize the two-third elected members. Their allegiance goes to the appointing authority. They also do not have specific electoral areas or communities to be responsible or accountable to. So where does their responsiveness or accountability go to?”

The response above corroborates a study by Ato-Arthur (2012) who observed that in June, 2005, 15 government appointees were seen to be acting as “rebels” the reason that these appointees had planned to vote against the President's nominee for the DCE position. “This is contrary to the perception of the Center since the appointees owe their positions to the President and, therefore, were expected to demonstrate their loyalty; this apparent “disloyalty” shown by the appointees to the President resulted in their dismissals” (p. 85)

Again, the respondents argued variously that the 30% government appointees to the Assemblies have outlived its usefulness. One respondent was very furious and posited that these so-called government appointees and experts come to the Assembly and on the floor of the House they do not speak, majority cannot even speak the English Language nor read. They come and instead of

doing their work as Honorable members, any time they see or hear of the MCE, they wag their tails like a dog which has seen its owner.

“They bow and with their hands at the back saying, Hon.(to the MCE) how are you? Their tone is more or less like a pupil who has seen his teacher. Always these individuals want the MCE to tip them with moneys. With this can they check him? Can they question his decisions? What kind of accountability? We are merciless” (excerpt from focus group discussion with assembly members)

From the foregoing this finding verifies a study by Ayee (2003) that, the idea that decentralization would bring with it corresponding effective, responsive and accountable DAs remain an illusion. Decentralization has not led to DAs that are responsive and flexible to the local needs, it has not led to an assembly that is very accountable to the local people (ibid). This study, therefore, vehemently supports the Ghana Decentralization Policy Review (2007) which has argued that the current practice has led to vertical accountability between the central government and the district assemblies and the proposals that in the long run, we should abolish the appointment of MMDCEs and 30% assembly members.

Another dimension of accountability has to do with the provision of information and public disclosure. The study, therefore, sought to find out the extent to which the Assembly provides relevant information concerning the assembly to the communities or to the public. It appears the level of information communication is not the best which the assembly itself has acknowledged but the solution appears to be only in ‘the books’ and ‘pipeline’. The study observed that the assembly has not put in pragmatic measures to disseminate information which has trickled down to the people. On 26-27th May 2009, the Assembly met at a workshop and came out with “One Year Implementation Action Plan (July 2009-June 2010)”, among the major themes in the implementation plan or strategic directions are: reducing apathy through effective communication, promoting accountability and transparency, preventing and resolving disputes and conflicts and mobilizing adequate resources.

Among the strategic measures to achieving the first two themes involved:

Strategic direction	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
Reducing Apathy Through Effective Communication	1. organize radio talk show to educate public on educational policies and reforms 2. organize public forum to create awareness on the effects of apathy	1. educate public on assembly's and government programs 2. organize community meetings to address topical development issues	1. conduct assembly Open Day to showcase achievements 2. organize Town Meetings to sensitize citizens on sanitation	1. use local FM to educate citizens on the Assembly Concept 2. Organize Public Hearing on the Medium Term Development Plan
Promoting accountability and transparency	1. organize municipal staff durbar to educate public office holders on the need to be transparent and accountable to the public 2. provide information on assembly's incomes and expenditures	1. organize semi-annual Assembly Meeting to discuss income and expenditure accounts 2. organize public budget hearing annually	1. audit public (MA/MEO) Account on regular basis 2. Streamline Accounting procedures at MEO, MA and all Decentralized Departments	1. conduct community sensitization on assembly's accounts 2. provide revenue charts at public places.

Fig. 4.2.1 Strategic Measures by TMA
Source: TMA

In spite of all these plans and workshops, the program hardly was enforced. It appeared in the books but it did not have any real enforcement on the ground. Respondents argued variously that these measures have not really taken effect and the situation has rather deteriorated.

What is perhaps more problematic is that there is a 'middle-man' or 'stop-gap' which instead of the assembly providing information directly to the people or major associations and trade unions, it seeks to use the Techiman Civic Union. Meanwhile, the civic union is very much under resourced, it has no vehicle and the chairman himself is not highly mobile to interact with any other individuals down there.

But in any Assembly meeting, the Civic Union is invited ostensibly to represent the 96 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and public at large in the municipality yet after the meeting everything ends with the civic union. The information or deliberations do not trickle to the members and public in general because my very observation is that the Civic Union as well as its executives needs adequate resources and empowerment. The Civic Union has a lot of

information and documents since it participates in most assembly deliberations, yet it does not have the wherewithal to disseminate or communicate such rich information to the people and other individuals of the municipality.

What also makes it difficult for information dissemination is that people hardly demand it and the Assembly also finds it difficult to voluntarily give information. The net effect is that the people or electorates are left in the dark.

The focus group discussion with electorates from rural communities revealed that at least their assembly members do provide them with some information during their traditional meetings like funeral grounds, naming ceremonies and religious gatherings. A follow-up question was posed whether such tendency has any effect on their attitude and decision to participate in the district level elections and the response was affirmative. Unanimously, they responded that if they get the required information, it indicates that they are valued and respected by their Assembly members; one of the respondents had this to say in the local parlance and this is a direct transliteration.

“It is the one who climbs the good tree that needs a good push and it is worth it if we even sacrifice a whole day not going to the farm to vote; my brother, this place people are happy with assemblyman election because everything we tell him and he also respects us”

Such theme ran throughout the discussion as various respondents testified about their various electoral areas. It is therefore not surprising that citizen participation and percentage turnout in rural electoral areas appear relatively high in spite of the fact that the municipal average appears lower. This finding corroborates a study by Hajnal and Lewis (2003) which argued that the character of a sub-national government has an effect on people's attitude and participation or turnout irrespective of the lower macro level turnout.

Another focus group discussion with electorates from the urban electoral areas brought to the fore that they do not even see their assembly members. Some of the informants were furious and their body language and expressions as well as how emotional they were attest that people are gradually losing confidence in the local government system. When a follow-up question was

asked whether this has an effect on their propensity to vote in the local election, the responses given were unpleasant and even those who voted in the previous (2010) elections appeared to have regretted doing so. This finding is in line with the observation made that; from the perspective of the poor and underprivileged, there is “a crisis in local governance because people are excluded from decision making; local governments are often neither responsive nor accountable to the poor; rather there seems to be arrogance and disdain with which local people are treated” (Narayan et al 2000, cited in Gaventa, 2011p. 254) and Yilmaz et al (2008) who argued that the available evidence indicates that decentralization’s promise for an accountable system remains mixed.

4.3 Performance of the Assembly

The study has variously pointed out that, the rational voter expects some greater returns from the political system. As has already been argued by Mueller (1979), the individual votes based on expected utility from their leaders, it is imperative to assess the extent to which people perceive the performance of the assembly and their leaders.

This objective, therefore, sought to find out the level of performance of the TMA from the perspective of officials and the individual electorates.

To begin with, respondents were asked to identify at least five key developmental projects the District Assembly (TMA) has undertaken in their electoral area. Among other questions asked included: how satisfied are you with the performance of your local authority’s overall services? Considering the amount of revenue (taxes from the market) and other resources available for local services, are you satisfied or impressed with the current state of affairs? Do the public have access to the assembly’s activities? In your own opinion, do you think people are happy and satisfied with the assembly member’s performance? What of the district assembly? How does the perception above affect the voting behavior of the electorate?

From the responses, it was observed that the assembly has chalked some successes in terms of performance. These successes hinge on infrastructural development (largely school buildings), bore holes and sanitation. Throughout the interviews conducted, the informants who answered this way provided similar answers and projects. These are some of responses given:

“The assembly plays a key role, it has done construction of storey buildings; classrooms, water and boreholes.” (Techiman Civic Union)

“I believe the assembly plays an important role in the development of the entire municipality; substantial portion of budget goes into capital expenditure. Educational infrastructure; that is JHS, primary and SHS blocks have taken about 55% of expenditure. Another area is sanitation which is recurrent expenditure. We have acquired logistics including tipper trucks, bulldozers, refuse containers and management of final disposal site. Finally, provision of safe drinking water ie Boreholes at Aworowa, Akrofrom, Twimia Nkwaeso”.(Municipal Planning Officer)

It was overwhelming that in spite of the strides the Assembly thinks it has made, it appeared the public are not very much impressed with the Assembly’s performance. Respondents complained that the information communication role has not been handled in the best way. This means the information and communication role has been poor; this point has been noted by Ayee (1996) that “the inability of DA members to meet the people of their electoral areas resulted in lack of detailed knowledge or information on the operations of the DAs” (p. 45).

Respondents argued that the Techiman Municipal Assembly possesses a very big and lucrative market which is a hub for traders from the West African sub region. It is one of the biggest and popular markets in the country (see profile of study area). The people or electorates consider the market as a ‘gold mine’ for the Assembly and revenue from the market alone if handled well could have helped solve almost all its challenges. It was also observed from the respondents’ emotions and gestures that they are not impressed or satisfied with the Assembly at all. There seemed to be some sort of frustration on their faces.

Among the reasons some of them gave were the poor sanitation in the municipality and perception of mismanagement.

“Upto the 3rd Quarter of 2012, people were impressed with sanitation until we had a breakdown of sanitation equipment when they started to show dissatisfaction. Other services such as licenses and permits affects us”.(an official from the TMA)

“I believe the Assembly plays an important role but for me I have not sighted any developmental project in my area ... People are not satisfied; they perceive the assembly is collecting more from the market but is not using it judiciously. My brother, I tell you that moneys from the market alone should make Techiman a better place. With IGF and Common Fund, people are kept in the dark and do not know the gains and how it is used.

Even at times the Assembly members do not know and understand what is presented to them. The technocrats will come and mention something to them; there is poor scrutiny because of the partisan posture of the Assembly”

(A Civil Society Organization. NB: respondent has also been an assembly member for 12 years)

“i believe the people rate the assembly as satisfactory; however, the people are not satisfied with some state of affairs. Eg. Piling up of refuse. When it comes to information, it has been very poor, in my own area, as an assembly member, a borehole was constructed but I was not informed neither the people. The people later complained of the location where it was sited; the Assembly still went ahead” (an experienced assembly member)

From the foregoing, one could argue that there is more room for improvement. A focus group discussion (FGD) with electorates from urban/peri-urban electoral areas really illustrated the frustration of these people. It can be said that the above respondents have been charitable and magnanimous in the choice of words and answers.

It appears that the electorates are very conscious of the Assembly and the way things are mishandled. To the people, those that are handled well or even the efforts being made by the assembly appear to be known to only a few section so all they know are the mishandled ones.

“The Assembly should buy air time and at least once a week they should come and tell us what is going on so that we can also call and ask questions , then we can see what they are doing with the market money”.

“Even a day’s toll from the market can collect all the rubbish in the town. It is true my brother and we have three major market days starting fully on Wednesday to Friday. But in recent times, everyday is a market day here. so where are the moneys?(excerpts from FGD with urban/peri-urban electorates.)

It appears electorates are very much enlightened and should no longer be taken for granted. Most of them are disgruntled but do not know the means to air or seek answers to their questions. The extent of illusion among the urban electorates cannot be overemphasized. They argued they are not privy to what is going on, there appears to be no explanation and at the mention of assembly member, the researcher was ridiculed by the group. This means the urban electorate sees the Assembly member as incapable and as they put it “helpless”. Four of the respondents did not take part in the 2010 district level elections and argued that they still stand by that decision in the 2014 elections. One of them who participated in the previous election is even more illusioned

because he thinks he has wasted his time. He has now decided to join his friends not to take part in the 2014.

Such a perception in the minds of electorates regarding the Assembly and assembly members has a wider ramification on their attitude towards participation in district assembly elections. This finding confirms a study in Bolivia by Hiskey and Seligson (2003) which observed that “citizen perceptions of the quality of local government services, is a factor that is a strong determinant of system support levels; those citizens with more positive views of local government services had higher levels of system support than those who viewed the quality of local government services as poor” (p. 84). Again, James (2007) employed expectations anchoring models to determine citizen satisfaction of local public services; he observed that “managing expectations, as well as perceived performance, may be an effective strategy for local authorities to raise satisfaction...” (p.1). He argued that the best way to lower frustration and dissatisfaction among electorates is to provide effective communication; strategies to lower expectations could include explaining to local publics about difficulties in service provision such as problematic socioeconomic conditions or budget and other constraints imposed by outside actors such as central government” (James, 2007, p. 13). Similarly, Matsusaka (1995) has brought forth the importance of information in increasing electorates’ interest, even the little that has been done, it needs to be communicated to the people and then there is the need to explain the challenges. He put it out that “the person is more likely to vote as she becomes sure about which way to vote, confidence in a voting decision is increased by raw information about candidates and knowledge about the model of the world” (p. 112). The finding is also consistent with a study by Ayee (1996) in Keta and Ho which found out that “the inability of most DA members to bring development to their areas led to their frustration, embarrassment and disappointment” (p.44). He observed that the display of disappointment was exhibited by the fact; “during the March 1994 DA elections only one-third of the DA members in both assemblies either stood for re-election or were re-elected” (ibid). It could, therefore, be argued that upon changing assembly members for almost two and half decades, the electorates have now realized that the problem may, perhaps not be with the Assembly members but the concept itself. It is, therefore very important for the Assemblies to streamline their activities very well to empower the Assembly members.

4.4 Responsiveness of the Assembly to the People

Article 254 of the 1992 Constitution provides that “parliament shall take steps necessary for further decentralization of the administrative functions and projects of the Central Government but shall not exercise any control over the District Assemblies that is incompatible with their decentralized status or otherwise contrary to law”

This objective of the study sought to find out the extent to which the Assembly or the Assembly members listened and acted on the very needs or demands made by the electorates on the political system. The researcher sought to find out the developmental concerns that community members brought to the Assembly or their Assembly members and how best such grievances were resolved. The researcher again wanted to find out whether the central government constrained the adaptability of the municipal assembly to the flexible or tailor-made needs of the local people or electorates.

The responses for this objective were quite mixed; but a general pattern has been observed.

It was observed that most of the projects being undertaken by the Assembly were initiated by the Assembly itself. However, it appears the process of arriving at these final projects or action plan is where the focus must be. There appear to be poor local consultation.

The planning officer for the municipality put it out that all action plans and projects they undertake are locally driven and in most cases they review some of the proposed projects in the action plans to meet current happenings. Other respondents corroborated such point that most of the things being done were assembly initiated and that the central government does not necessarily interfere.

“Through a call from Nananom and the people, we are building a new court premise and a police barrack. There are other projects which are priorities whilst others require technical input and these have to be handled by the professionals”

“Mostly the things being done in the Municipality are initiated by the Assembly sometimes through their action plans”.

“I would say about 60% of the things we do here are locally driven; example, sports stadium was initiated by us, school infrastructure; bore holes”

It was also observed that most assembly members hardly attempt to seek any demands or inputs from the people, therefore, even if assembly action plans are locally driven, such plans may not necessarily come from the people.

What is even more problematic is that there appears to be no feedback from most Assembly members on the state of affairs, people have several challenges mainly sanitation. This is more pronounced in the urban and peri urban electoral areas but in the rural areas the Assembly members have put in informal mechanisms to seek demands or listen to their electorates in a regular manner and perhaps their demands are not quite or relatively expensive. Responses obtained throughout the study indicated that there is disparity in the level of responsiveness between various assembly members. A respondent has this to say:

“Some of the Assembly members listen to the needs of the people but others who are in the majority do not. As I have already said, areas like Krobo, Kuntunso/Tadieso, Oforikrom and others are doing quite impressive (TCU). (key: all electoral areas mentioned are rural)”

Meanwhile, the people perceive the Municipal Assembly to be financially more than capable and do not see why such demands are not met. People think the Internally Generated Fund alone should be enough to cater for all their needs. They lamented on the poor sanitation situation in the municipality and some electoral areas mostly in the hub of the town. Some respondents argued that:

“When I was an assembly member, we wanted a refuse site and the government in power had containers sitting idly but never made efforts to provide my area with even one. I think the assembly has the financial capacity but at times it is just political sabotage” (a civil society organization)

“Yeah, I believe the assembly has the financial capacity to address the people’s needs if only they do things right and decide to cut waste & corruption” (media)

Yet the assembly and its officials argue that the Common Fund is not enough and deductions at source as well as its ‘tied nature’ tend to affect their activities.

“The common fund is tied and everything is done by the IGF. I believe that if financial commitment is high the assembly should be able to address the demands of the people”.(an official from the Assembly)

Some respondents also argued that they at times present demands to the Assembly but no action would be taken and they would not even hear from the Assembly again. This is worrisome because Section (27) of the Local Government Act, Act 462 entails and obliges all District Assemblies to institute Public Relations and Complaints outfit to deal with such issues. It was worrisome that throughout the fieldwork and data collection no respondent made mention of this unit and how best the Assembly receives demands and the way it relates to the public. It appears the information has not gone down well with the people and the few who are aware do not even trust the system.

In a much later telephone conversation with one of the respondents (CSO), he argued that the assembly has such outfit but it appears people do not know of it and education must go on. He gave a personal testimony that there was an issue relating to wrong siting of a building which he personally reported to the unit and nothing came out of it; it appears most cases such as wrong siting of buildings are mostly permitted by the Assembly through bribes so if you even complain, nothing will come out of it.

But in an earlier interaction with the Assembly, I was informed that the assembly is responsive to the people and at times they receive petition from; for instance, if there is dilapidated nature of a public building or school building and a petition is sent to them, they acted on it.

“Sometimes through a cover letter by say a headmaster showing the dilapidated structure of their schools, we may assist” (an official from the assembly);

It was observed that this has not gone down well with some stakeholders who hold a different view; one of the respondents who held a contrary view argued that:

“The Assembly should try as much to address the demands of the communities. My school has sent complaint to the Assembly concerning erosion of the school buildings. They have not done anything about it perhaps they want to witness a disaster before they will act” (a headmaster)

One thing that was also observed was that it appears most assembly members and the people are not well informed or educated on the district budgeting process and action planning. It appeared that mostly the people do not send their demands to the assembly at the right time. If it is, then the assembly usually hides behind the budget to ignore sensitive demands needed by the people. At times they would tell you the budget has already been approved so wait; the waiting period

seems never to expire. This is true of public officials as observed by King and Stivers (1998) that public officials and electorates are usually in contention, “for every citizen cry against the bureaucracy, there is a matching administrative response that disparages a lazy, apathetic, and uncommitted citizenry” (p. 49)

Communication has not been the best and a major cause of the ambivalence between District Assemblies, assembly members and other stakeholders including the communities and electorates. Respondents argued that this has an implication on the propensity of the electorates to vote in district level elections. If people have needs and grievances and are not aware of who will solve it, then it appears fruitless to join the queue to go and vote for the assembly members.

5. Conclusions

From the discussion so far, it is very evident and the study argues that voters in the 21st century are very sophisticated and rational, their decision to participate in the district level election depends on several considerations and on the returns they expect from the system and goes beyond media hype and ‘fanfarism’. It can be concluded from the study that most electorates (especially those in urban and peri-urban) have realized that the initial promises that decentralization will lead to responsiveness, increased service delivery and participation appears illusory and this is confirmed in a study by Ayee (2003); however, this study further argues that such feeling of illusion appears mixed since the intensity is high in the urban and peri-urban areas.

The selection criteria (appointment) of the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) as well as 30% Assembly members has not gone down well with the people because it decreases the level of competition in the local elections at the same time limits local accountability. This finding is in line with Ayee (2003) who observed that there are various provisions in the legal framework which reduces responsiveness and accountability of DAs to the local people. Rational and informed voters who are aware of this, (mostly urban and peri-urban) have pessimistic view of the District level elections which have culminated into indifference, negative attitude and poor participation among urban electorates.

Generally, participation in local elections in the TMA is low because the assembly has not done much in terms of administrative responsibility, however, observing the outcomes of the focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and juxtaposing them with secondary data available; it can be concluded that in the midst of low municipal average turnouts, respective DA members or electoral areas that do well can maximize participation in their jurisdiction or electoral areas. DA members that embrace the concept of administrative responsibility in terms of constant interaction with electorates, information sharing and accountability are likely to increase the turnout of District Level Elections in their electoral area. This conclusion is consistent with the argument made by Hajnal and Lewis (2003) that in spite of the general low turnout levels in local elections, the disparities in turnout levels among different communities is a manifestation of the electoral institution and the nature of that local government.

The same conclusion can be drawn for performance of the Assembly; the people are not really content with the level of performance of the Assembly especially in the area of sanitation and utilization of resources from the market. The people have high expectations because they perceive the Assembly as generating much internally generated fund (IGF) from their market. The inadequate provision of information has generally accounted for this; basically when the Assembly relents on its efforts, it is the urban and peri-urban areas that are greatly affected. This means the Assembly and DA members in the urban and peri-urban electoral areas have not done much in communicating to the electorates the achievements and challenges faced in service provision. James (2007) has argued that strategies to lower expectations could include explaining to local public about difficulties in service provision such as problematic socioeconomic conditions or budget and other constraints imposed by outside actors such as central government. Failure to communicate Assembly challenges to electorates raises the people's expectations and will not be satisfied with any prevailing level of effort.

It would, therefore, be argued that the individual voter is rational, more likely to develop a positive attitude and participate in local elections when he sees certain features exhibited in favour of electorates by the DA or the respective DA members. Self introspection is, therefore, a key for the DAs and DA members if they want their electorates or constituents to be enthusiastic

about the Local Level Election and not necessarily about the fanfare, media hype or effort by the Electoral Commission (EC).

5.1 Recommendations

First and foremost, the local governments must encourage stakeholder participation and consultation on major decision making processes. There is the need to constantly interact and engage with civil society organizations, trade unions and organized groups. Occasionally, town hall or community gatherings should be held. These regular interaction processes have a tendency of placing the Assembly in a better light and individuals will develop a good attitude towards the Assembly activities. The Assembly ought to have an electronic mail (e-mail) address immediately and needs to have a data base of all civil society organizations in the District. The free flow of information and interaction between them needs to be upheld.

Moreover, the study reveals that interest and participation of electorates in urban and peri-urban electoral areas are relatively low, it would be appropriate for DA members in such electoral areas to adopt modern methods of enhancing regular interaction and responsiveness to their constituents. It appears electorates in such electoral areas are sophisticated and have access to modern Information Communication Technology (ICT) and are variously on the social media platforms such as facebook and twitter; DA members in such environments ought to adopt context-dependent approaches to enhance effective citizen interaction and involvement. This study, therefore, recommends the concept of e-governance which employs the use of modern ICT to enhance information sharing and communication between DAs, DA members and their electorates. This platform will ensure effective citizen enlightenment and through such platforms the activities of the Assembly could well be communicated to the electorates on regular basis. Though it is not every individual who has access to the internet or computer, it could be observed that most average persons today have android phones that have internet and social media applications. An observation made by the researcher during the focus group discussions with electorates from urban and peri-urban electoral areas confirms this assertion.

It is also imperative for MMDAs to institutionalize mechanisms that oblige MMDA members to interact with their members at certain periods of times. The process of meeting community

members must not be left to the discretion of DA members but must be well institutionalized and localized. At least there should be some mandatory number of times to meet electorates whilst the DA member may also meet them at other times they deem fit. Currently, even though the Local Government Act makes it mandatory, it appears the assemblies have not enforced or localized it. DA members in all electoral areas must be given some budgetary allocations to organize such gatherings to interact with electorates and stakeholders at such stipulated periods. Again, any developmental project undertaken by the MMDAs in any electoral area must actively involve the assembly member in such area and if possible must be a major conduit or player in such activity. This will make the people realize the importance of their assembly member and his role in their development.

Finally, in order to ensure accountability of the MMDCEs to the respective MMDAs, this study welcomes the call for popular election of the MMDCEs. Again, the 30% government appointees must be scrapped off so as to make the whole concept very competitive and accountable to the electorates. When this happens, such individuals who have intentions of becoming DA members will now join the electoral process to make it more competitive and they will now have electoral areas to account to. More importantly, these individuals are more likely to be objective and independent minded in the execution of their oversight role and not appendages to the centre. This study, therefore, recommends an introspective approach; which argues that ensuring effective citizen participation in the local level election requires DAs and DA members to be in touch with their communities and electorates on constant basis to provide information on how resources are used. They are to establish an interactive and deliberative relationship as well as rapport that will whip up the confidence of the latter in the DA concept. This is because increasing citizen participation in DLE is not an event or ‘one-stop’ activity which occurs just at the election period or season; it is a process which never ceases but is a continuum. What makes the District Assembly Election more unique is that it was premised on ‘power to the people’ and ‘enhanced service delivery’ and those are what the people expect from the system; any other thing that deviates from these appears disappointment.

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