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# **The Role of Women in Traditional Governance in Ghana: A Case Study of the Three Northern Regions**

**A Study Conducted By the Research Department of the National  
Commission For Civic Education (NCCE)**

**November, 2011**

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**Baron Y. Amofo**  
**Deputy Chairman (Support Services)**

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## Executive Summary

The Research Department undertook a study on the *Role of Women in Traditional Governance: Case Study of the three Northern Regions* in November 2012. The report provides findings on the roles women have played in traditional governance. It also indicates the appropriate ways to enhance the participation of women in both traditional and modern governance to enhance our nation's democracy.

### Some Characteristics of Respondents

A total of a thousand respondents (1,000) were chosen for the survey. This comprised of eight hundred (800) respondents from the general public, one hundred (100) opinion leaders and one hundred (100) individuals who had specialized knowledge about the subject under study. Five hundred and twenty (520) representing fifty two per cent (52 per cent) of the respondents were female. Four hundred and eighty males (480) constituting forty eighth per cent (48 per cent) were also interviewed.

Within the general public and opinion leaders more respondents were aged between 40 – 49 years, consisting of 220 respondents, representing (24.4 per cent). This was closely followed by age group 30 – 39 and 50 – 59 with 219 (24.3 per cent) and 181 (20.1 per cent) respectively.

More of the respondents with specialized knowledge were older. They consisted of 43 (43 per cent) who were aged between 50 – 59 years. This was followed by age group 60+ with 31 (31 per cent) and 40 – 49 age group with 15 (15 per cent).

The religious affiliation of respondents indicate that 479 (47.9 per cent) of respondents were Muslims, 385 (38.5 per cent) Christians and 134 (13.4 per cent) Traditionalists.

### Some Roles Played by Women in Traditional Governance

The study portrays that women did play some roles within the traditional governance system in the northern regions in the past. These roles include that of Women Chief, Female Tindana, Queen Mother and Magajia.

Of the 800 respondents of the general public, 614 (68.2 per cent) indicated that customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs. Whilst 285 respondents (31.7 per cent) indicated that customs and traditions permitted women to be chief. This indicates that though in a minority in some areas women chiefs existed in the past.

The female Tindana who is the earth Priestess and owner of the land has the same or similar authority and functions as her male counterpart. The results indicate that 650 (72.6 per cent) of the 900 of the general public and opinion leaders said there had never been a Tindana in their traditional area; 248 (27.6 per cent) said they had female Tindanas in their traditional area. The findings also indicate that queen mother's existed in the traditional governance system. The position of *Magajia* is one that cuts across all three northern regions with a majority of respondents indicating that the position has always been part of their traditional system.

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## **Participation of Women in Governance**

Respondents were asked to rank the participation of women in traditional governance. The rankings included Very High, High, Low, Very low. Over forty per cent of respondents from the general public 348 (43.5 per cent), opinion leaders, 44 (44 per cent) and 43 (43 per cent) of individuals with specialized knowledge described that the participation of women in traditional governance in the Northern regions as low.

The respondents also indicated that there is a low participation of women in the district assembly elections. As many as 54 per cent of individuals with specialized knowledge, 51.6 per cent of the general public and 49 per cent of opinion leaders gave this response. Respondents indicated an equally low participation in Parliamentary elections

Most of the respondents, 513 (64.1 per cent) of the general public, 61 (61 per cent) of individuals with specialized knowledge and 57 (57 per cent) of opinion leaders said the state was doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance.

However, for 285 (35.6 per cent) of the general public, 39 (39 per cent) of individuals with specialized knowledge and 43 (43 per cent) of opinion leaders, the state was not doing enough to ensure the participation of women in governance.

## **Impediments to Women's Leadership in Governance**

The result indicates that some cultural beliefs do minimize women's participation in governance. Findings show that out of 900 respondents (who comprised of the general public and opinion leaders) 245 (27.29 per cent) mentioned superstitious beliefs on the part of the community as a hindrance to women participation in governance'' Another 188(20.8 per cent) of respondents held this cultural view that women were not strong enough, incapable and are ritually unclean and therefore cannot lead.

The respondents indicated the factors that prevented women's participation in traditional governance. A few examples are that in the three northern regions some of the traditions and customs do not permit women to be leaders. Women in the area have low self esteem or lack self confidence. Men also do not support their wives to take up leadership positions.

Other factors preventing women from participating in modern governance include the lack of education, ignorance and financial constraints on the part of women.

## **Enhancing Women's Participation in Governance**

The findings indicate that there is a need for women to be participating in all forms of governance activities.

- Women need to take up traditional leadership positions and stand for district or parliamentary elections. They also need to actively participate in voting.
- Women should be given formal education as well as capacity building in leadership skills.
- There is also the need to do away with cultural beliefs that inhibit the effective involvement of women in governance and change the negative perception people have about women.
- Mobilize logistics and financial support for women contesting elections.

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- Demand and support for quota systems for women to be represented in all governance at levels.
  - Finally work for quota systems for women to be represented at all levels of political party activities, district assemblies, parliament and other important high governmental positions.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction and Methodology

### 1.0 Background

Traditional governance is a system of governance where individuals are selected or nominated to a leadership position through the existing customary laws and practices. Such individuals are from the royal family or lineage. For the modern system of governance individuals are elected to a leadership position through party sponsored elections organized by the state. Ghana thus has a dual system of governance.

There are different forms of African traditional governance among the various ethnic groups and societies in different parts of Africa. Despite the differences one common feature or element runs through them all, which is the devolution of power by ascription. By ascription a person inherits governmental authority or position mainly by virtue of membership of a particular family or clan (Wikipedia).

In some cases birth is not solely the only requirement for appointment of a person to leadership position. Other criteria such as the character or other personal traits are involved. People who exercise governmental authority are referred to by different names in different parts of Africa such as Kings, chiefs, elders, and emirs. These leaders rule or govern their societies with the assistance of lower rank rulers, and/or advisers who are also heads of their respective clans and families (His Excellency Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, 2004).

In Ghana, chieftaincy is one of the oldest, enduring and important traditional institutions and because of its importance it is granted under the Fourth Republican Constitution (1992), Article 270 (1) which states that “the Institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional council as established by customary law and usage, is guaranteed”.

Article 277 of the 1992 Constitution defines a chief as “a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage”. Chiefs are therefore the highest decision makers in the traditional system.

In the past among the Akans, chiefs were responsible for maintaining a link between their people and the ancestors, division or town and to make sure that his people are well protected against attacks or molestation from neighbours and enemies (Nukunya 2004:69). It is also known that among the Akans the matrilineal descent plays a very vital role in the selection or nomination of a chief. Stoeltje (1988) said the duties of the queen mother and the chief differ but run parallel in duality, that is to say, while the chief oversees the entire community, the queen mother is also responsible for women and domestic affairs as well as advising the chief in all matters.

The most important person in the chiefs’ entourage is the priest or priestess. Traditionally, the priest tells the chief the time to start a war, what to do during crises and so on. He or she performs rituals to find out from the gods what needs to be done in the community. He also offers sacrifices to pacify the gods when there are any wrongdoings done by any member of the community. The priest is chosen by the gods through divination.

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Communities in Northern Ghana have known chieftaincy prior to the era of colonization. For the people of Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja the culture of chieftaincy goes far back in time to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, in some communities such as Balsa, Moba, Konkomba, Lowiili and Talensi, which are acephalous societies where there were no chiefs but councils and elders, authority was in the hands of the earth priests known as Tindana. The Tindana was head of the first family that settled in every new village, only he knew, and was known to the ancestral spirits and the earth deities.

Some of his duties included:

- Allocating lands to new settlers and collecting from them tithe, offering and sacrifices
- Mediating between tenants and the earth deities and
- Serving as Justice of peace who settles disputes.

Apart from the matrilineal descent system of the Akans, other communities have patrilineal descent system which is practiced among the people of the North, Ewes and Gas in Ghana.

“Among the Dagbamba’s in Northern Ghana, a person is forbidden by custom to rise on the chieftaincy hierarchy to a title higher than that attained by his father.” “Also the princely statuses are based on descent and therefore the Dagbambas’ recognize the patrilineal descent”. (Awedoba, 2006). Awedoba used the term ‘Dagbamba’ to refer to the ‘Dagomba’, ‘Mamprusi’ and ‘Nanumba’.

The traditional governance system and the modern governance system do have some similarities. In the modern governance system the leader/president is supported in his work by such independent agencies as the Judiciary, the council of state and an elected Parliament as well as Commissions, whose existence and functions are provided for in the Constitution. The traditional rulers/chiefs also combined executive, legislative, judiciary, military, economic and religious roles in the past and even currently to rule their people. In other words the chiefs or kings were supported by several sub-chiefs who perform different functions both military and other wise (Nukunya, 2004).

Indeed, the office of the traditional rulers are protected and recognized by the Constitution. Article 270 (2) of the 1992 Constitution states that “Parliament shall have no power to enact any law which;

- (a) confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever, or
- (b) In any way detract or derogate from the honour and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy”.

According to the 2010 provisional census result, women represent about 53 per cent of the total population of Ghana and yet when it comes to major roles played by women little is said about them. Gender roles socialization and allocation plays a very vital feature in the various ethnic societies. In fact in the pre modern society, there were roles that were solely preserved or played by women and men.

Among all the ethnic groups in Ghana, men are seen as the overall head of the family, he undertakes the more laborious tasks when it comes to basic agriculture production. In terms of leadership positions, men were usually appointed to fill positions such as Kings, Chiefs, Okyeame etc. Women on the other hand assume basic domestic roles and were seen as bearers of children and retailers of food items. Petty trade was a pervasive economic activity that was exclusively a woman’s occupation.

According to Boaten I, (1991); the position of a woman as a wife makes her an economic asset since the husband uses the service of the wife to enhance his economic status and this still pertains in current

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traditional segment of modern Ghana. In most homes, women independently controlled any money that they receive from their own endeavors, even though their husbands normally provided the capital funding, and as wives, assume the main work and financial responsibility for feeding their husbands and children and for other child-care expenses.

In the event of wars, there were many ways in which women helped the cause. Women on the battlefield helped pass water and ammunition to the soldiers; they acted as nurses to treat soldiers who were injured. Some women also participated in the wars as leaders of the army, the case of Queen Adisa of Nanumba, Dokua of Akyem and Yaa Asantewaa of Asante, are well known in the history of their people.

In terms of leadership positions, women in an ethnic society such as the Asantes assume important social, political and ritual roles. Within the lineage and extended family, female elders assume authority, predominantly over other women. The oldest women are considered to be the ablest advisers and the repositories of family histories.

Boaten I, (1991) noted that the male stool would not have been in existence in the Akan Traditional area, since it is a matrilineal society, if not for the fact that women have physical inferiority and are seen to be soft; and also the cycle of menstruation which is seen to be evil or unclean.

In the Akan traditional area, the queen mother is the second most important person in the Asante state. She is responsible for the women in the clan or town and has a large say in picking a new chief. It is she (the queen mother) who announces the successor after the destoolment or death of the chief, but only after discussion, consultation and agreement with the lineage heads and other elders. She always sits on the left hand side of the chief and when the chief travels abroad, except during wars, she must accompany him. She alone has the right to publicly rebuke the chief, spokesman and the elders and to directly address the court.

Another important responsibility for her is to be in daily attendance at the palace and attend all court sessions except during her menstrual periods (Busia, 1951: Warren, 1973:14). The same can be said about the Ewes and Gas' where the queen mother takes part in nominating a new king and sits in the council during meetings.

In Northern Ghana, the notion that women do not play leadership roles is debatable, since some leadership positions were reserved for them. In the colonial era there used to be women who played much bigger roles in their respective ethnic groups or clan. For instance in Mamprugu, female chiefs occupy the skins of Dindani and Samini. The 'Dindani-Tamboku' chieftancy position is reserved for the daughter of the Nayiri as compensation for the service of Lamisi, a daughter of the Nayiri who assisted her father in defeating a powerful chief called Nanoraara who was a menace to Mamprugu (Odotei & Awedoba, 2006). The 'Dindani' performs the following special duties for Mamprugu.

She notifies the sub-chiefs who are potential contestants to come and contest for the skin when vacant. If the Nayiri dies, she comes to occupy the palace and sleeps in the Nayiri's room till a new Nayiri is enskinned, while there she takes charge of the widows.

She settles disputes between people in the community and has her own council of elders. She performs a religious role by providing the ritual items that the Tindanas would use as sacrificial offering. (Odotei & Awedoba, 2006).

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Among the Mamprusis, any senior woman from the chiefs lineage called the Pua-Kpeim is the leader of the women and her role is to intervene whenever there is a misunderstanding between and among the chiefs wives and also prepares food for funeral ritual purposes. The first wife of the chief also acts as a queen mother and head of the women. Her duty is to take custody of the skin regalia of a deceased divisional chief during the period of enskinment of a new divisional chief. She also arranges the order in which the chief's wives routinely spend the night with him, (Boaten I 1996:37).

Boaten I went further to mention the situation in the Dagbon traditional area where they have a detailed system of female chief ship. Ya-Na is the overall leader and Gundo-Naa, the daughter of Ya-Na the territorial ruler with full administrative authority. The first six wives of the chief are also enskined as chiefs and assigned to the various sub chiefs. They are to look after the interest of these chiefs and defend them at the chief's court where they have a case before the court. The first wife is however, given the title Gbangzaling and given a territorial jurisdiction.

Another female leader in Northern Ghana is the Magajia. There are diverging beliefs and information on how exactly a Magajia is appointed. Whiles some claim that Magajia requires the majority consent from the other women; others also believe that the acting community's chief chooses his favorite candidate to represent the women. There are no formal criteria for candidacy and there seem to be no official election involving several candidates.

However, before a woman is appointed as a Magajia, she needs to fulfill some requirements so that she can meet her female followers' expectation. First, her family situation has to be flexible enough so that she can spare time for the numerous duties that the office demands. In addition, she needs to be in position of authority and respect—usually generated through age in the societies concerned. It is also important that she has accumulated wealth (Meier, 2003).

The duties of the magajia among the Builsa and Tallensi is that she settles disputes, acts as the overall head of the women. She also caters for people especially women by providing them with credit loans to start up small business enterprises (Meier, 2003). In addition among the Hausa settlers in Ghana, Magajia had their own compounds, advised the king, and received part of the royal money (Smith 1965).

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Even though the traditional governance system is vibrant and run alongside the modern governance system, it does not seem to give sufficient recognition to the leadership role of women.

For a long time, queen mothers and magajias were not admitted to the National House of Chiefs even though the Constitution recognizes them. Women are only included if they occupy the position of paramount ruler in the traditional state which is very rare. In response to women's petition to be allowed into these statutory bodies, only two out of the ten regions voted in favour of the inclusion of women. With some arguing that their inclusion will create confusion in the traditional hierarchy, the northern region based their rejection on the fact that they did not have queen mothers in spite of the fact that there are women traditional-leaders of comparable status.

In the southern part of Ghana, there is a clearly defined role for the queen mothers and they are part of the decision making process in their traditional area. It is also noted that, they take part in nominating

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a chief and are the only ones that can rebuke a chief openly. This is however not the case in Northern Ghana, where they have over the years held the notion that, women did not play any role in traditional governance. But it has been discovered that women in Northern Ghana did play leadership roles in the past and in fact some positions were reserved for them.

In the Dagbon traditional area, the wives of the chief up to the sixth wife were all assigned to the various sub chiefs to defend them in the chiefs' court whenever they had a problem. But why have female chiefs not been able to influence some cultural practices, many of which are harmful to them, examples are the female genital mutilation, widowhood rites and forced marriages. This goes to show how far they can influence decisions since they were not made to sit in council.

Because of the perceived non-recognition of the traditional roles of women in the northern part of the country, fewer women from that part are seen in traditional leadership position today. Examples are Puanaba Akuolug from Gumbo Divisional area and Pognaba Abeliwine Dalin Kiima, Paramount Queen of Bongo Traditional area. The installment of "Puanaba," as queen mother's would be called in the Northern Region and Upper East Region and "Pognaa" in the Upper West Region is a great joy since women will now be able to serve on council and influence decisions.

Today, Parliament has nineteen women parliamentarians (8 per cent out of 230). Out of this figure the Northern part of the country has two women parliamentarians, one from the Northern region and the other, Upper West region. In the last parliament, there were six women parliamentarians from Northern Ghana out of the total number of twenty-five women. The first, second and third parliament of the fourth republic saw one, four and three women respectively from Northern Ghana.

Ghana is among the few countries on the continent with low women representation in parliament. Some countries have adopted the quota system, which has helped them in having many women in political office. A quota system of 30-50 per cent is mostly used in promoting women advancement in politics in these countries. An example is Rwanda where 50 per cent of their parliamentarians are women.

It is revealed that lack of experience and fear of competition and campaigning are some of the factors attributing to why women are reluctant to take up political office. It is clear that women do not have enough support in political position, the question is, should the government of Ghana follow the footsteps of Rwanda by reserving some seats for women in order for a number of them to take part in active politics? Should the political parties reserve some of their safe seats for women in order to increase women participation in politics?

## **1.2 Organization of Work**

From September 25 to October 11, 2011, a 4-member team from the Research Department of the Commission embarked on a fact-finding mission to the three northern regions earmarked for the study. These were made up of the Northern, Upper West and Upper East regions. This exercise engaged people with specialized knowledge on the role of women in traditional governance system. Thus, information was elicited from personalities with varied background such as academia, women chiefs, chief linguists as well as registrars of both the regional houses of chiefs and the traditional area councils. Others were heads of institutions like the Tamale Institute of Cross-Culture Studies, Centre for Sustainable Development Initiative, Bolgatanga and the Wa Municipal Assembly. The information

gathered which made a tremendous impact in the finalization and conceptualization process of the study touched on issues such as;

- History of the major traditional areas of the selected regions.
- General history about women in leadership position.
- History of traditional roles of women in the past.
- Leadership and traditional roles that women play currently
- Women in governance.
- Challenges women face in relation to Customs, religion and tradition etc.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to establish what roles women in northern Ghana played in traditional governance system historically, and how this can be brought to bear and to improve their role in leadership position in modern Ghana. However, the specific objectives of the study were;

- To identify specific leadership roles played by women in traditional governance in Northern Ghana.
- To find out the factors preventing women from playing important leadership roles in modern governance system.
- To find out what leadership roles women play or can play in current modern governance system.
- Suggest ways to increase women participation in leadership position

### 1.4 Methodology

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collate the primary data and it was supplemented with secondary data. In all, twenty (20) constituencies were selected from the three northern regions for the study. Training programmes were organized for forty (40) research assistants who were engaged to collect the data from the field. The selection of the respondents was based on both purposive and random sampling techniques. In all, one thousand (1,000) respondents were contacted and were engaged in a face-to-face interview session.

#### 1.4.1 Sample Design

The survey was conducted in twenty (20) constituencies in the three northern regions of Ghana, namely the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. The constituencies selected were derived from a sample of forty nine (49), proportionate to the size of the total number of constituencies in the three northern regions. The study covered eleven (11) constituencies in the Northern Region, five (5) in the Upper East Region and four (4) in the Upper West Region. The population of the study included the general public, opinion leaders and specialized persons all from the selected constituencies. Fifty per cent (50 per cent) of the total respondents were women. The breakdown of the selected constituencies is as follows:

<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>Upper East Region</b>	<b>Upper West Region</b>
Wulensi	Bolgantanga	Jirapa
Bole	Bongo	La-Nanton
Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo	Builsa South	Sissala
Yapei-Kusawgu	Garu-Tempane	Wa Central
Gushegu	Talensi	

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Nalerigu  
Karaga  
Saboba  
Savelugu

#### **1.4.2 Sample Selection**

The study employed both purposive and random sampling techniques in selecting one thousand (1,000) respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred (200) each of the opinion leaders and specialized persons. Six hundred (600) respondents were selected from the general public by the application of the simple random sampling technique. With this technique, respondents were selected based on the purpose of the survey and every person had an equal chance of being selected. In all, fifty (50) respondents were selected from each of the twenty (20) constituencies. This comprised of a total of forty (40) members of the general public, five (5) each from the opinion leaders and specialized persons categories respectively.

In selecting the respondents from the general public category, the household was used as the main primary sampling unit and those who qualified for selection were individuals who were eighteen years (18) or above as at the time of the exercise. Each day, the research assistants used the day's code to select the starting point for the location of a house to enter for the administration of the questionnaire. A sampling gap of three (3) for sparsely populated areas and five (5) for densely populated areas were also applied in selecting the houses.

The opinion leaders selected included religious leaders, head of civil society organizations, teachers, women organizations, district chief executives assembly members, Members of Parliament and heads of institutions. Those covered under the specialized persons were paramount chiefs, council of elders, registrars of regional and traditional councils among others.

#### **1.4.3 Survey Instrument**

Two semi-structured questionnaires were developed, one for both the respondents from the general public and opinion leaders' categories and an in-depth questionnaire designed for the specialized persons.

Both questionnaires assessed the socio-demographic background of the respondents such as age, sex, marital status, highest educational attainment, occupation and religion.

Views were also sought on the role of women in traditional governance in the areas under investigation. The survey instrument underwent a two-day pre-testing after which it was fine tuned for implementation.

#### **1.5 Questionnaire Administration**

The forty research assistants (40) administered fifty (50) questionnaires on respondent at each of the twenty (20) constituencies selected for the survey. Hence, the total of one thousand (1,000) questionnaires targeted for the survey was achieved. The table below shows detail of the responses.

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**Table 1.1: Response to Questionnaire Administration**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Questionnaire Administered</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
General Public	600	600	60
Specialized Persons	200	200	20
Opinion Leaders	200	200	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>100</b>

## **1.6 Training and Field Work**

A training team made up of officers from the Research Department undertook a ten (10) day residential training workshop for the forty (40) research assistants engaged to collect data from the field. All the research assistants were officers from the regional and district offices of the NCCE. In attendance at the training workshop was the Northern Regional Director of the NCCE. The training took place at the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies in the Northern Region.

The training workshop which was carried out in two parts because it entailed two different questionnaires exposed the research assistants to the essence of the study. The objectives, methodology and the survey instruments were comprehensively expatiated on. After each presentation, research assistants were given the opportunity to seek clarification on areas they might have lacked better understanding. Group work and demonstration on interviewing skills normally summed up the training session. During the demonstrations, research assistants were made to administer the questionnaire on each another in both the English and local languages. This exercise proved how best research assistants had grasped the knowledge imparted to them for the task. The result on this exercise was highly encouraging.

The data collection started a day after each training session. Each research assistant administered twenty five (25) questionnaires within a period of three (3) days. Averagely, eight (8) questionnaires were administered per day. The English and local languages were used in interviewing respondents were applicable.

The research assistants were supervised by the District Directors of the Commission. The District Directors ensured that completed questionnaires met the required standard before they were accepted for onward transfer to the head office of the Commission.

## **1.7 Data Analysis**

The data received from the field were edited, coded and entered at the Research Department using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results of the study are presented in the analysis which follows.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Socio-Demographic Background of Respondents

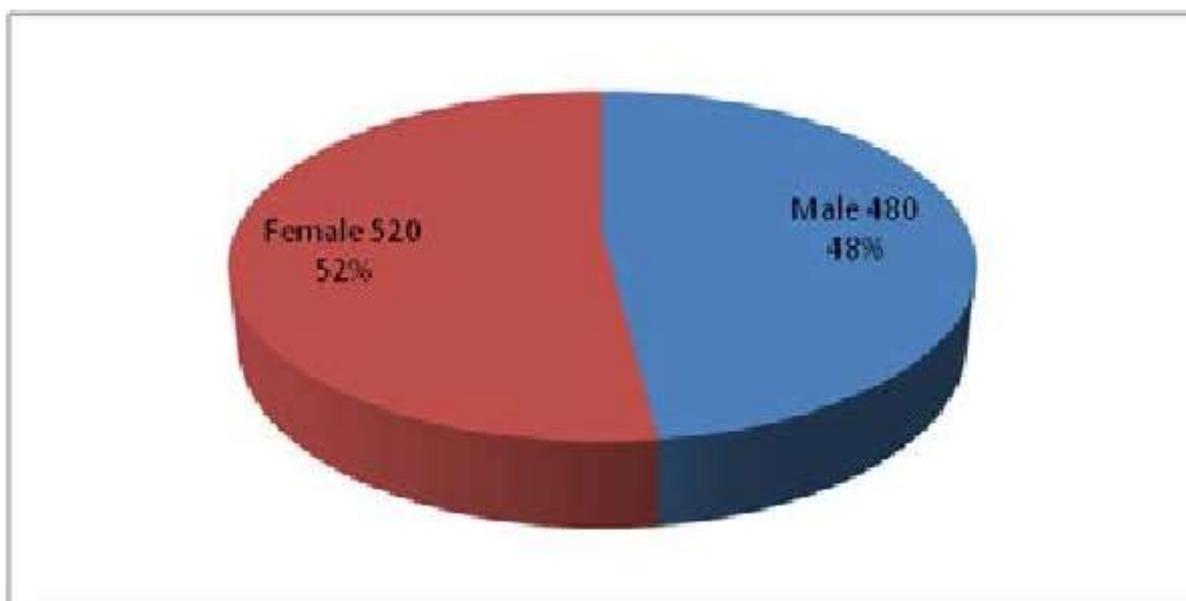
#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample population such as age and sex distribution, marital status, occupation and as well as religious affiliation. This will help us better understand our respondents.

#### 2.1 Sex Distribution of Respondents

As shown the figure 2.1 below, the survey indicates that out of the 1000 respondents comprising of the General Public, Opinion Leaders and Specialized Individuals, more female 520 (52 per cent), than male 480 (48 per cent) respondents were interviewed. This can be attributed to the fact that this survey is about or concerns women and priority was given to more female respondents. Thus up to 50 per cent of the sample questionnaires were to be administered to female.

**Figure 2.1: Sex of Respondents**



A further break down of sex by type of respondents also revealed that all but one had more female respondents than males. Out of total of 100 opinion leaders interviewed, 53 (53 per cent) were females while 47 (47 per cent) were males, with the general public out of the 800 interviewed, 422 (52.75) were females as compared to 378 (47.25 per cent) respondents who were males. However with regards to the specialized respondents, 55 (55 per cent) out of the total 100 respondents were males as compared to 45 (45 per cent) respondents who were females.

## 2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

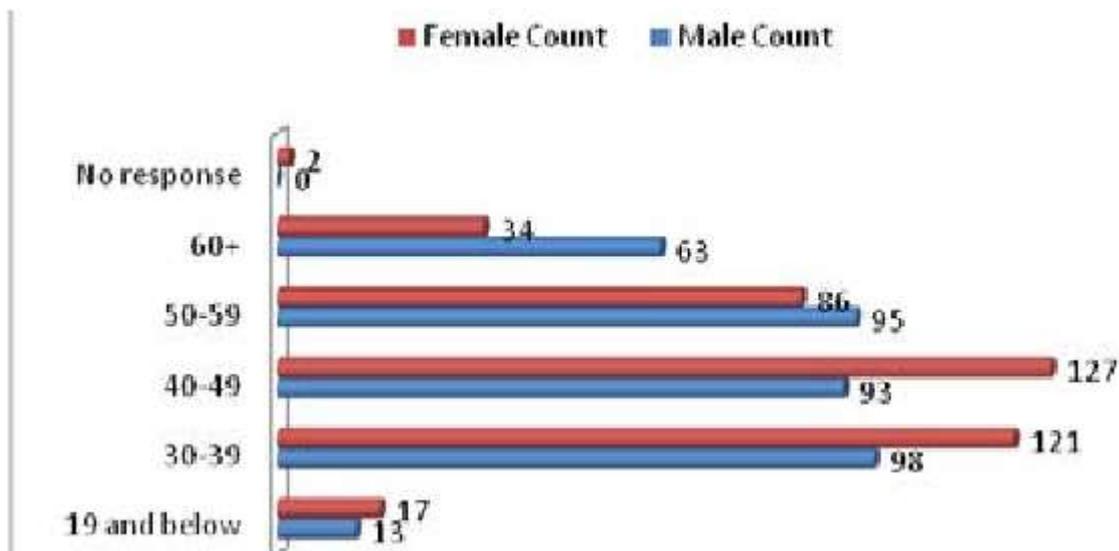
The study covered respondents of various age groups and for the purpose of study the age groups were grouped into four namely 19 and below, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+.

With the general public and the opinion leaders, large proportions were between the ages of 40-49. This group comprised of 220 respondents representing 24.4 percent. Out of this number, 93 (10.9 per cent) were male as compared to 127 (14.1 per cent) who were females. And this was closely followed by the age group 30-39 and 50-59 with 219 (24.3 per cent) and 181 (20.1 per cent) respectively. Table 2.1 and Fig 2.2 below provides full details on the age groups of the respondents as well as the age by sex of respondents.

**Table 2.1: Age Distribution of Both General Public and Opinion Leaders' Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent ( per cent)
19 and below	30	3.3
20-29	151	16.8
30-39	219	24.3
40-49	220	24.4
50-59	181	20.1
60+	97	10.9
No response	2	0.2
Total	900	100

**Figure 2.2: Age and Sex of Respondents**



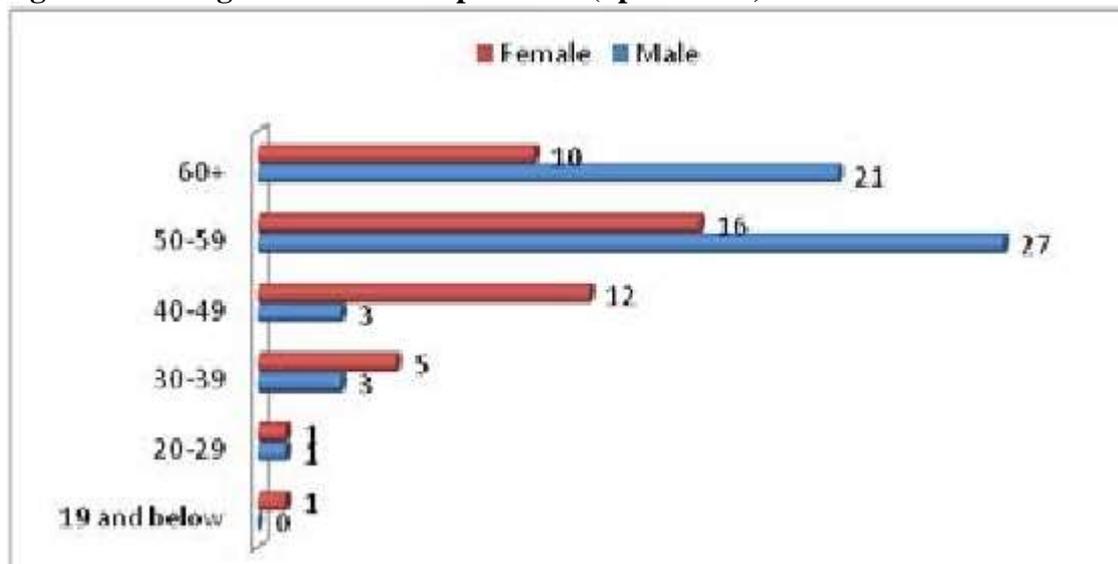
In terms of the specialized persons, majority of the respondents are seen to be older people as a greater number 43 (43 per cent) of respondents were within the ages of 50-59 followed by the ages group 60+ with 31 (31 per cent) and the age group 40-49 with 15 (15 per cent). This is so because these respondents are supposed to be people who are well versed in the cultural practices of their various traditional areas and have more knowledge in their traditional governance system.

**Table 2.2: Age Distribution of the Specialized Respondents**

	Frequency	%
19 and below	1	1.0
20-29	2	2.0
30-39	8	8.0
40-49	15	15.0
50-59	43	43.0
60+	31	31.0
Total	100	100.0

Analysis of the age and sex of the specialized respondents shows that all the age groups had a higher response rate for males compared to females. In comparison, the highest male respondents were from the age group 50-59 with 27 (62.8) of the total male respondents as compared to 16 (37.2 per cent) of the total female respondents within the same age group. The figure below shows the age and sex of respondents.

**Figure 2.3: Age and Sex of Respondents (Specialized)**



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## 2.3 Educational Attainment of Respondents

**Table 2.3: Educational Attainment of Both General and Opinion Leaders' Respondents**

	Frequency	Per cent
No Formal Education	285	31.7
No Formal Education (But Can Speak/Write in English and/or Vernacular)	59	6.6
Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS, etc)	165	18.3
Secondary (SHS, Trg.Col., Voc., etc)	248	27.6
Tertiary (Poly, Univ, etc.)	130	14.4
Any Other	6	0.7
No Response	7	0.8
Total	900	100

Table 2.3 above depicts the educational attainment of the general public and the opinion leaders. From the table, a large number 285 (31.7 per cent) of the respondents have had no formal education (are illiterate), 59 (6.6 per cent) have no formal education but can speak or write in English and/or vernacular, 248 (27.6 per cent) have however had secondary education. Respondents with basic education amounted to 165(18.3 per cent) and those with tertiary education also amounted to 130 (14.4 per cent).

A cross tabulation of the educational attainment and sex of respondents revealed that 167 (35.2 per cent) of the female respondents had no formal education, as compared to 118(27.8 per cent) of the male respondents who had no formal education.

In regards to the number of male respondents, 124 (29.2 per cent) had secondary education followed by those with no formal education with 118 (27.8 per cent) and those with tertiary education with 72 (16.9 per cent).

From the above analysis, it is true to say that there is a marked contrast between females and males in levels of educational attainments. The perception that girls are homemakers or belong to the kitchen can be one factor which results in high illiteracy among females. Such low educational attainment will necessarily have a negative impact on the nation's level of literacy since reading and writing skills of people would be very low.

With regard to the specialized respondents, it is interesting to note that out of the total, 100 respondents 41 (41 per cent) had no formal education, 19 (19 per cent) had tertiary education and followed by basic education 18 (18 per cent) and secondary education 15 (15 per cent). Again a cross tabulation of the sex and educational attainment also revealed that more than half 25 (55.6 per cent) of the total females respondents had no formal education, 7 (15.6 per cent) have had secondary education and 5 (11.1 per cent) have had tertiary education as compared to 16 (29.1 per cent) of the male respondents who had on formal education and 14 (25.2 per cent) who have had tertiary education.

**Table 2.4: Educational Attainment of the Specialized Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
No Formal Education	41	41.0
No Formal Education (But Can Speak/Write in English and/or Vernacular)	6	6.0
Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS, etc)	18	18.0
Secondary (SHS, Trg.Col., Voc., etc)	15	15.0
Tertiary (Poly, Univ, etc.)	19	19.0
Any Other	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

## 2.4 Occupational Background of Respondents

Respondents were asked to state their occupational background and in order to capture the various occupational groups in Ghana; we categorized them into eight groups.

**Table 2.5: Occupational Background of the General Public Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Student	74	9.3
Farmer/Fisherman	233	29.1
Teacher/Lecturer	110	13.8
Public Servant	103	12.9
Trader/Businessman	130	16.3
Unemployed	72	9.0
Artisan	54	6.8
Any Other	24	3.0
TOTAL	800	100

The analysis of the survey results of the general public reveal that the highest number of respondents, 233, were farmers/fishermen. They constituted 29.1 per cent of the total of 800 respondents. Traders/businessmen were the next predominant occupation with 130 (16.3 per cent), followed by Teachers/lecturers 110 (13.8 per cent), public servants 103 (12.9 per cent) and students 74 (9.3 per cent), however unemployed amounted to 72 (9 per cent).

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**Table 2.6: Occupational Background of Opinion Leaders**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Student	5	5.0
Farmer/Fisherman	22	22.0
Teacher/Lecturer	19	19.0
Public Servant	28	28.0
Trader/Businessman	12	12.0
Unemployed	4	4.0
Artisan	2	2.0
Any Other	8	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A look at the table above of the opinion leaders also shows that the highest number of respondents, 22 (22 per cent) out of the total of 100 respondents were public servants. Farming/fishing were the next predominant occupation with 22 (22 per cent), Teachers/lecturers followed with 19 (19 per cent), students 5(5 per cent) while 8 (8 per cent) respondents were in occupations other than the ones listed and they form the “any other” category, these include chiefs, priests, pastors etc.

**Table 2.7: Occupational Background of Specialized Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Student	2	2.0
Farmer/Fisherman	30	30.0
Teacher/Lecturer	12	12.0
Public Servant	14	14.0
Trader/Businessman	12	12.0
Unemployed	15	15.0
Artisan	4	4.0
Any Other	11	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table above also depicts the occupational background of the specialized respondents. From the table it is clear that out of the total of 100 respondents, the highest number of respondents were farmers/fishermen with 30(30 per cent), surprisingly unemployed were next with 15(15 per cent), public servants 14 (14 per cent). Respondents who were Teachers/Lecturers and those into trading/businesses followed with 12 (12 per cent) each. 11(11 per cent) were in the “any other option”.

A critical look at all the types of respondents and occupational background shows that the most predominate occupation is farming/fishing, this can be attributed to the fact that the agriculture sector

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is the largest sector in Ghana and as such farming is the most common occupation in the three Northern regions.

Analysis of the occupation and sex of the types of respondents also shows that, with the general public and the opinion leaders, a large number 113 (23.8 per cent) of the female respondents were into trading and businesses, 104 (21.9 per cent) were into farming/fishing, 70 (14.7 per cent) were teachers/lecturers while 56 (11.8 per cent) were public servants. The high number of respondents in trading and businesses could be a reflection of the fact that government or civil service jobs are hard to come by and as a result many more Ghanaians especially women in the absence of a vibrant industrial economy have adopted trading or private enterprise as a means of livelihood.

On the other hand, male respondents dominated farming/fishing with 151 (35.5 per cent), 75 (17.6 per cent) were public servants, 59 (13.9 per cent) and 38 (8.9 per cent) were teachers/lecturers and students respectively as compared to 70 (14.7 per cent) and 41(8.6 per cent) for the female respondents. In terms of unemployment, females respondents had the highest with 45 (9.5 per cent) while 31 (7.3 per cent) was recorded for the male respondents.

An analysis of educational background and occupational background also shows that one's educational background goes a long way to determine one's occupation as 166(58.2 per cent) who had no formal education were involved in farming/fishing while those with tertiary education 50(38.5 per cent) were public servants.

A cross tabulation of sex and occupational background of the specialized respondents reveals that majority of the female respondents into trading/businesses and unemployed with 11 (11 per cent) each. 9 (9 per cent) were into farming/fishing while only 5(5 per cent) were teachers/lecturers. On the other hand, majority 21 (21 per cent) of the male respondents were into farming/fishing, 11 (11 per cent) were public servants while only 4(4 per cent) were unemployed.

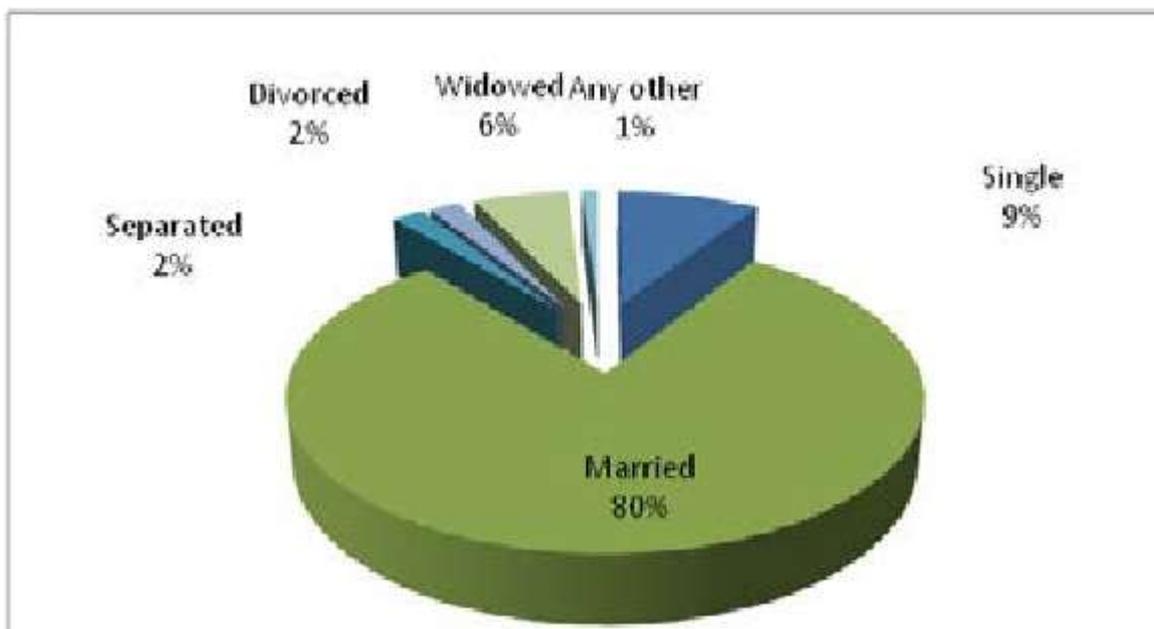
## .5 Marital Status of Respondents

**Figure 2.4: Marital Status of General Public Respondents**



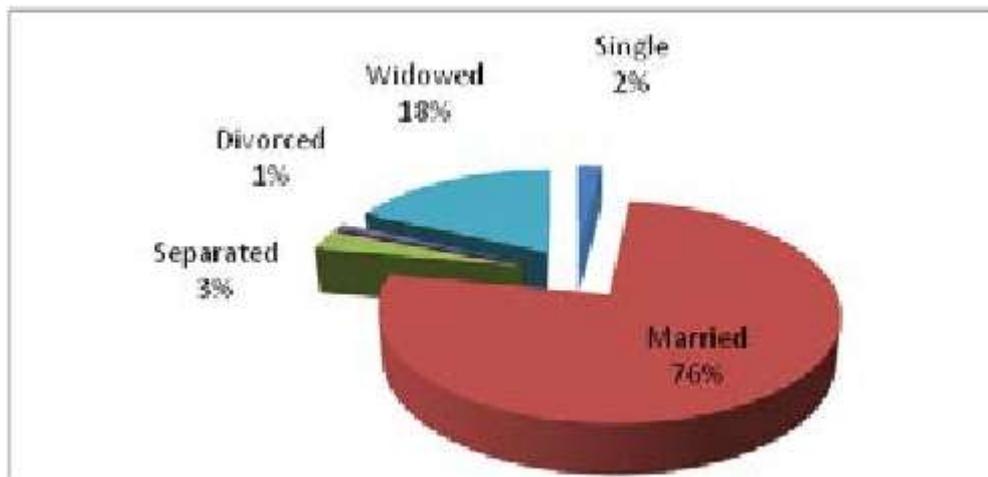
The population data split by marital status of the general public shows that, more than half of the population 547 (68.4 per cent) were married, 159 (19.9 per cent) were single, 51 (6.4 per cent) were widowed while 22 (2.8 per cent) and 18 (2.3) were divorced and separated respectively.

**Figure 2.5: Marital Status of Opinion Leaders' Respondents**



The marital status of the opinion leaders also revealed that, majority 80(80 per cent) of the total respondents were married, 9 (9 per cent) were single, 6(6 per cent) were widowed while those separated and divorced amounted to 2 (2 per cent) each.

**Figure 2.6: Marital Status of Specialized Respondents**



With the specialized respondents, similar pattern also occurred as majority 76 (76 per cent) out of the total 100 were married, 18(18 per cent) widowed, 3 (3 per cent) separated while only 2 (2 per cent) and 1(1 per cent) were single and divorced respectively.

In general, by examining the types of respondents and the marital status one can conclude that, a large number 703 (70.3 per cent) of the respondents were married, followed by those who were single with 170 (17 per cent) and the widowed with 75 (7.5 per cent).

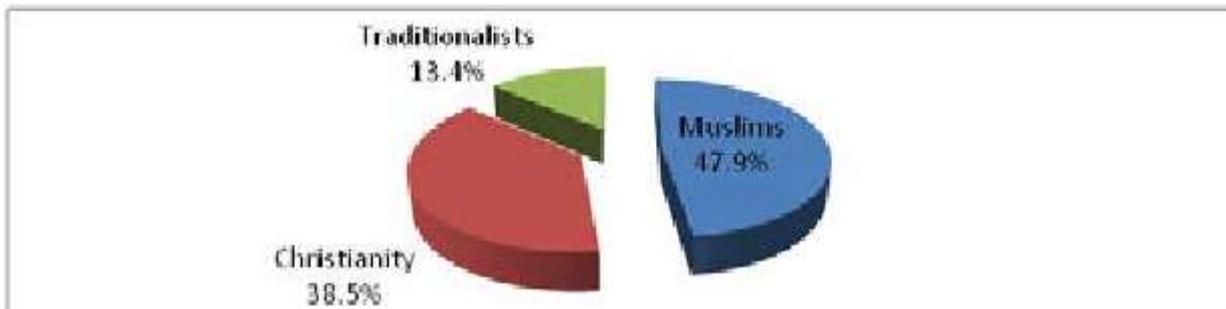
In cross examine marital status by sex of respondents of the general public and opinion leaders, it is interesting to note that 320 (75.3 per cent) of the male respondents were married and 14 (3.3 per cent) widowed as compared to 307 (64.6 per cent) of the female respondents who were married and 43 (9.1 per cent) who were widowed, this is because males turn to marry more frequently than female and also because there are more male death at every age.

Analysis of the marital status and age of respondents shows that a greater number of respondents who were married 186 (29.7 per cent) were within the age group “40-49”, while respondents who were widowed 24 (42.1 per cent) and 23 (40.4 per cent) were within the age groups “50-59” and 60+ respectively.

## 2.6 Religious Affiliation of Respondents

In Ghana, the freedom of worship guaranteed in our Constitution has made it possible for citizens to join any religious denomination of their choice. The three main religions are Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion.

**Figure 2.7: Religious Affiliation (General)**



Analyzing the general religious affiliation of all the types of respondents (general public, opinion leaders and specialized) it was observed that 479 (47.9 per cent) respondents were Muslims; respondents who were followers of the Christianity religion were 385 (38.5 per cent) while traditionalists were 134(13.4 per cent). This confirms the fact that more than half of the population in the Northern sector of the country is Muslims. However, 1 (1 per cent) respondent did not fall under any of the three religions and it was classified under “any other”. Religions such as Buddhism, Eckankar etc fell under this category, 1(1 per cent) did not respond to this question.

A study of the religious affiliation and the constituency of interview shows that Karaga Constituency had the most respondents who were Muslims with 48(12.2 per cent) this was followed by Savelugu Constituency with 46 (11.3 per cent). On the other hand, the Constituency with the highest Christian respondents was Lawra-Nandom with 43(12.3 per cent), next was Jirapa Constituency with 39(10.6 per cent).

In contrast, Lawra-Nandom and Karaga constituencies had the lowest number of respondents who were Moslems and Christians with 2(.5 per cent) and 1(3.4 per cent) respectively.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Roles Played by Women in Traditional Governance System**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Women in Northern Ghana played and continue to play some leadership roles in traditional governance in their respective traditional areas.

Men have been seen and continue to be seen as the overall head of the family and communities in the traditional governance system in both the northern and southern parts of Ghana.

Thus, in terms of leadership roles, men were and are still appointed to fill positions such as Kings, Chiefs, Linguists (Okyeame), executioner etc. Women assume very minimal leadership roles generally in the traditional governance system.

However, in the Akan, Ewe and Ga traditional areas of southern Ghana, the Queen mother is seen as the second most important person in the traditional governance system in these traditional areas. The Queen mother assumes authority over women of the clan, town or chiefdom or kingdom and largely responsible for picking a new chief or King. The queen mother announces the successor after destoolment or death of a chief. She also sits in council and is the only person who has the right to rebuke publicly the chief and the council.

The seemingly absence of clearly defined roles for comparable leadership roles of a queen mother in the Northern sector of Ghana gave the impression that women in Northern Ghana did not play any leadership roles in the past. It has however, been discovered that women played some leadership roles in the past and still continue to play in traditional governance systems in their respective traditional areas. In fact some positions were reserved for them in the traditional governance system of their respective areas. The chapter examines the knowledge/view of respondents of the leadership roles played by women in the past in the traditional governance system in Northern Ghana.

It also examines the knowledge and view of respondent on the current leadership roles women play in the traditional governance system.

The specific issues examined under the chapter are as follows; Leadership roles played by women:

- i. The Female Chief
- ii. The Female Tindana
- iii. The Queenmother
- iv. The Magajia

Also other leadership roles played by women are looked at. Then, again, the chapter looks at economic roles played by women. Here it looks specifically at economic roles played in the past by women; economic roles played currently by women and finally, the changes in the traditional roles of women.

#### **3.1 Leadership Roles Played By Women**

Women in the three Northern regions played some leadership roles in the traditional governance system

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of their respective areas contrary to the general notion over the years that women did not play any leadership roles in traditional governance. Among the major leadership roles played by women in the traditional governance system identified by the respondents are that women served as chiefs or women chiefs, Tindana or land priests or priestess, Queen mother and magajia (leader of women). The study also identified some other leadership roles played by women among which are; mobilization of women for developmental activities as well as forming associations to mobilize women for financial support and facilitation of other community activities. These are looked at in detail later in the write up.

### **3.1.1 The Female Chief**

According to Odotei and Awedoba (2006), in Northern Ghana, women played and continue to play much bigger roles contrary to the general view that they did not play any roles in the traditional setting. They held that in Mamprugu, female chiefs occupy the skins of Dindani and Samini as well, other few areas where the position was solely reserved for women. The study therefore tried to find out the veracity or otherwise of this notion.

To establish this fact, the respondents were asked whether in their traditional areas, customs and tradition permit women to be chiefs. To this question, the majority of respondents, 614 out of 900 (68.2 per cent) indicated that customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs in their traditional areas. 285 respondents out of the 900 (31.7 per cent) also indicated that customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs in their traditional areas while one respondent (1 per cent) declined to answer. The study also sought the views of opinion leaders and out of the 900 general public respondents, 100 were opinion leaders. When their views were sought on the same issue, 74 respondents out of the 100 (74.0 per cent) said in their traditional areas, customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs while 26 respondents (26.0 per cent) also said in their traditional areas, customs and traditions allow women to be chiefs.

The study further sought the views of 100 respondents or individuals with specialized knowledge on traditional governance system. From this category of respondents, (58.0 per cent) indicated that customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs in their traditional areas, while 42 respondents (42.0 per cent) also said customs and traditions permit women to become chiefs in their traditional areas. From this data, it is clear that some women occupy skins in the traditional governance system, an important leadership position in the northern sector of Ghana. This revelation therefore confirms the view of Odotei and Awedoba (2006) that female chiefs occupy some skins in the Northern region. It also goes to confirm the view of Boateng I that in Dagbon, there is a detailed system of female chief ship, thus putting to rest the notion that women do not play any leadership roles in traditional governance in the North.

The study went further to establish whether there has ever been a woman chief in the traditional area of the respondents. This question was asked because even though customs and traditions may permit a female to be chief, it could be possible that no woman has ever been made a chief.

In answer to whether there has ever been a woman chief in the traditional area of respondents, as many as 576 respondents (64.0 per cent) said there has never been a woman chief in their traditional area while 260 respondents (28.9 per cent) of the same general public also asserted that there has ever been a woman chief in their traditional area. However, 64 respondents (7.1 per cent) declined to answer to this question.

From the perspective of opinion leaders, out of the 100 opinion leaders interviewed on whether there has

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ever been a woman chief in their traditional area, 64 respondents (64 per cent) said there has never been a woman chief in their traditional area while 26 respondents (26 per cent) also answered that there has ever been a woman chief in their traditional area with 10 respondents (10 per cent) declining to answer. When the point of view of the specialized category was sought on whether there has ever been a woman chief in the traditional area of respondents, as many as 64 respondents out of the 100 (64.0 per cent) said there has never been a female or woman chief in their traditional area while 35 respondents (35.0 per cent) of this category also indicated that there has ever been a woman chief in their traditional area with one (1) respondent (1.0 per cent) offering no answer.

### **Qualities of a Female Chief**

The election, nomination or selection of a person to occupy a leadership position in traditional or modern governance systems demands that such a person possesses some qualities. To be a female chief in the traditional governance system certainly demands that such a woman should possess some qualities to warrant her nomination into such a high office of a chief. The study therefore solicited the views of the respondents on what qualities a woman should possess to be enskined a woman chief in their traditional areas.

To this question, as many as 413 respondents of the general public (45.9 per cent) said a woman should be of royal lineage to be made a chief; 236 respondents (26.2 per cent) also pointed out that a woman should be respectful to be made a chief; 184 respondents (20.4 per cent) held the view that a woman should be brave in order to qualify as a woman chief. A further 167 respondents (18.6 per cent) also indicated that a woman should be impartial to qualify as a female chief; wealth was mentioned as one of the qualifications for the position of a female chief and 59 respondents (6.6 per cent) said that a woman should be wealthy to qualify as a chief. Physical appearance was also mentioned as one of the qualifications for enskinment as a female or woman chief and here 29 respondents (3.2 per cent) said a woman should be physically beautiful in order to be made a woman chief while 19 respondents (2.1 per cent) indicated other qualities such as being the first wife of a chief.

From the point of view of opinion leaders, a woman should be of a royal lineage to qualify to be made a chief, 48 respondents (48.0 per cent) from the 100 opinion leaders sampled indicated that. Respectfulness is another major qualification for nomination for a leadership position especially when it has to do with women particularly so when customs and traditions exact so much respect from women. Here 33 (33.0 per cent) respondents also thought a woman needed to be respectful to qualify to be made a chief. Another qualification for chief ship is bravery, so a woman should be brave to be made a chief. Impartiality is a quality a person should possess to be a good leader and 20 of the opinion leaders sampled (20.0 per cent) believed that a woman should be impartial to qualify to be made a chief. Five (5) respondents (5.0 per cent) of this category also indicated that a woman should be wealthy for her to be made a chief. Finally, one (1) respondent (1.0 per cent) thought that a woman should be physically beautiful for her to qualify to be a chief while six other respondents (6.0 per cent) of this category mentioned other qualifications for a woman to be made a chief.

The respondents with specialized knowledge on customs and traditions also agreed with the general public that a woman should be of royal lineage to qualify to be made a chief. Fifty (50) respondents (50.0 per cent) out of the 100 people sampled from this category believe that a woman should be of royal lineage to be made a chief. Like the respondents from the general public, respondents from specialized knowledge also believed that respectfulness on the part of a woman was critical for qualification as chief and 22 respondents (22.0 per cent) of the 100 persons sampled from this category said a woman should be respectful to be made a chief.

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Another critical qualification for chief ship according to the data is impartiality. Here, 20 respondents (20.0 per cent) of this category like their general public counterparts also thought that a woman should be impartial to qualify to be made a chief. Bravery is another quality a person should have to be made a chief, more so a woman, and 18 respondents (18.0 per cent) from this category again agreeing with their general public counterparts indicated that a woman should be brave to be made a chief. Five (5) respondents (5.0 per cent) also believed that wealth should be a qualifying factor and thus pointed out that a woman should be wealthy in order to be made a chief. Physical appearance is thought to be a qualification for chief ship but here the data shows only one respondent (1.0 per cent) thought that a woman should be physically beautiful to qualify to be a chief while three (3) respondents (3.0 per cent) in this category mentioned others.

From the data it is quite clear that the two categories of respondents, that is the general public and people with specialized knowledge, were unanimous in their opinion of the qualities a woman should possess in order to be made a chief. From the data, the most critical quality a woman should possess according to the two categories to qualify her to be made a chief is that the woman should be of royal lineage. A large number of respondents, 463 respondents (46.3 per cent) of the 1000 persons sampled believed that a woman should be of royal lineage to qualify her to be made a chief.

Another qualification the data revealed consensus from both categories was respectfulness. Both categories of respondents agreed that for a woman to be made a chief she must be respectful. According to the data, 258 of the 1000 respondents sampled from both categories (25.8 per cent) agreed that a woman should be respectful in order to qualify her to be made a chief. It is not surprising since the customs and traditions of the Northern Ghana exact a lot of respect from women.

This is evident in the manner in which women have to go on their knees when greeting their males and even sometimes prostrating when greeting their chiefs. Impartiality is yet another quality both categories of respondents agreed was crucial to qualification for chief ship. Both category of respondents believed that besides being of royal lineage, respectful and brave, a woman should be impartial in order to be made a chief. Here, 185 (18.5 per cent) of respondents of both categories said so.

Bravery is also very critical in the enskinment or enstoolment of a person as a chief and more so, a woman, generally thought to be weaker than a man. The data reveals that the respondents from both categories believed or agreed unanimously that besides being of a royal lineage and respectful, a woman should be brave in order for her to be made a chief.

Finally, the two qualities both categories of respondents believed were not very critical or important to qualify a woman to be made a chief were wealth and physical beauty.

### **3.1.2 The Female Tindana**

The Tindana in Northern Ghana is the earth Priest, and owner of the land in the various traditional areas. He was the head of the council of elders in the hitherto acephalous societies with traditional authority vested in him in those societies. The Tindana is considered the link between the people and the ancestral spirits and the earth deities of the various traditional areas and hence performs some ritual on behalf of the people.

The female Tindana is therefore the earth Priestess and owner of the land in the various traditional areas with the same or similar authority and functions of the male counterpart.

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The study therefore tried to establish whether there has ever been a female Tindana in the traditional areas of respondents.

From the general public, a high majority of 650 respondents (72.6 per cent) said there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional areas while 248 respondents (27.6 per cent) also indicated there has ever been a female Tindana in their traditional area with two (2) respondents (2.0 per cent) declining to respond to the question.

From the opinion leaders, 78 respondents out of the 100 sampled, (78.0 per cent) observed that there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional area while 21 respondents (21.0 per cent) also said there has ever been a female Tindana in their traditional areas. One respondent (1.0 per cent) in this category offered no answer.

The same issue was looked at from the perspective of people with special knowledge of customs and traditions of their areas, and 71 respondents (71.0 per cent) out of the 100 sampled said there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional areas while 29 respondents (29.0 per cent) also said there has ever been a female Tindana in their traditional areas.

### **Roles Played by the Female Tindana**

The next stage was to establish the role or roles a female Tindana plays from those who indicated there has ever been a female Tindana in their traditional areas.

The data reveal that for those who said there has ever been a female Tindana in their traditional areas, 179 (19.9 per cent) said a female Tindana mediates between her people and the gods. Another important function or role of a Tindana is the performance of ritual on behalf of the people and 178 respondents (19.8 per cent) observed that a female Tindana performs rituals on behalf of the people. Tindanas are also believed to be the owners and general administrators of their respective traditional areas, 70 respondents (7.8 per cent) were of this opinion while 57 other respondents (6.3 per cent) also indicated that a female Tindana arbitrates and settles disputes between her people. One respondent (0.1 per cent) indicated some other role.

From the stand point of respondents with specialized knowledge on customs and traditions who said there has ever been a female Tindana in their traditional areas, 25 (25.0 per cent) of them said a female Tindana mediates between her people and the gods. Performance of rituals on behalf of the people followed and 22 respondents (22.0 per cent) believed that a female Tindana performs rituals on behalf of her people.

Tindanas are generally, believed as the owners and general administrators of their respective land, thus 12 respondents (12.0 per cent) indicated that a female Tindana is the owner and administrator of the land of the traditional area. Another 10 respondents (10.0 per cent) said she arbitrates and settles disputes among the people with no respondent in this category indicating to the contrary.

The data reveal that the two most important roles a female Tindana plays are mediating between her people and the gods and performance of rituals on behalf of the people. This point became clear as many of the respondents from both the general public and specialized categories mentioned or listed these two as such. The other three roles of a female Tindana attracted a good number of respondents though.

The data show an overwhelming majority of respondents, 721 (72.1 per cent) from both the general public and the specialized knowledge group who said there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional areas. This group was asked to give reasons why there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional areas.

Below is a table showing the reasons why there has never been a female Tindana in the traditional areas of those respondents.

**Table 3.1: Reasons Why There Has Never Been a Female Tindana in the Traditional Areas (General Public)**

Reasons For No Female Tindana in the Traditional Area	Frequency	Per cent
Customs and traditions do not permit a female Tindana	421	46.8
Women by their biological makeup are not qualified to perform spiritual sacrifices	92	10.0
As wives, women are not permanent members of the family	48	5.3
Women cannot own land	34	3.8
Women lack leadership skills	17	1.9
Not applicable	248	27.6
Any other	23	2.6
Don't know	5	0.6
No response	12	1.3
Total	900	100.0

From the table above, 421 respondents (46.8 per cent) of the general public said there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional areas because customs and traditions do not permit a female Tindana. Women are generally perceived unclean during their menstrual period and so 92 respondents (10.2 per cent) believed that there has never been a female Tindana in their areas because women by their biological make up are unqualified to perform spiritual sacrifices. Another 48 respondents (5.3 per cent) held that as wives, women are not permanent members of the family and therefore cannot be a Tindana while 34 respondents (3.8 per cent) also indicated that women cannot own land and as a result cannot be a Tindana. Some other respondents, 17 (1.9 per cent) thought that women lack leadership skills hence cannot be a Tindana which is a leadership position in a traditional setup. For the other reasons why there has never been a female Tindana in the traditional areas of respondents, 23 (2.6 per cent) indicated other reasons. Furthermore, 248 respondents (27.6 per cent) said the question was not applicable to them while 12 respondents (1.3 per cent) declined to state any reason with five (5) respondents (0.6 per cent) saying they did not know why there has never been a female Tindana in their areas.

The study solicited reasons why there has never been a female Tindana in some traditional areas from persons with specialized knowledge category. The reasons adduced by this category of respondents are the same as those from the general public except for one reason which said that the role of Tindana is given by the gods to only men. Thus, for this category, 45 respondents (45.0 per cent) noted that there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional area because customs and traditions do not permit a female Tindana. The role of Tindana is given by the gods only to men and 11 respondents (11.0 per cent) were of this view while six (6) respondents (6.0 per cent) also said women by their biological makeup are not qualified to perform spiritual sacrifices that go with the position.

One critical issue in the traditional governance system in the Northern part is the ownership of land.

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A woman cannot own land in the Northern sector and invariably cannot be a Tindana a position which entitled her to become a general administrator of the traditional land. Hence, three (3) respondents (3.0 per cent) said there has never been a female Tindana in their traditional area because a woman cannot own land and therefore cannot be the owner and administrator of the traditional land.

A further 29 respondents (29.0 per cent) observed that the question was not applicable to them and while one respondent (1.0 per cent) said he or she did not know, two respondents (2.0 per cent) did not offer any reason at all.

### **3.1.3 The Queen Mother**

The Queen mother according to Busia (1951) and Warren (1973:14) is the second most important person in Akan tradition. She is responsible for the women in the clan or town with a major stake in picking and installing a new chief. She sits in council and takes part in decision making. She is the only person who can publicly rebuke the chief, spokesman and the elders and also directly address the court. There are clearly defined roles for a queen mother in the Akan traditional areas of the country. The Ewes and Gas also have the same roles and powers carved out for their queen mothers. It is believed that the queen mother concept is new to the Northern sector of the country.

According to Mr. Yusiff Akulugu, Assistant Registrar of the Upper East Regional House of chiefs, the queen mother system is a new concept being adopted in the Northern part of the country and there are no clear cut roles for them yet. However, women have always played some roles similar to the roles of queen mothers in the Northern part of the country. The roles of a woman chief and magajia are similar or akin to those of the queen mothers of the south.

The study in an attempt to establish the truth or otherwise of this opinion asked the respondents whether in the past, there were any queen mothers in their traditional areas.

The data reveal that out of the 900 respondents sampled from the general public on this issue, 570 (63.3 per cent) said they did not have queen mothers in the past in their traditional areas while 330 respondents (36.7 per cent) also observed that they did have queen mothers in the past in their traditional areas. What is however not clear is whether those who said they did have queen mothers in the past were mistaking women chiefs for queen mothers or they really meant queen mothers as women chiefs in the Northern part plays similar roles.

However, in some situations women chiefs play much bigger roles than queen mothers of the south as they preside over territories independently with subjects and council of elders under them for example, the Dindani-Tamboku and Samini skins. The queen mothers are always subject to the kings or chiefs. According to the views of the 100 respondents with specialized knowledge on customs and traditions of their respective areas sampled, 57 (57.0 per cent) said they did not have queen mothers in the past in their traditional areas while 43 respondents (43.0 per cent) also indicated that they did have queen mothers in the past in their traditional areas.

Granted that this category of respondents have in-depth knowledge of the customs and traditions of their respective areas, then it could be concluded that queen mother's existed in some parts of northern Ghana in the past. Then the views of the general public category about the existence of queen mothers in the past could not be a mistaken role identity of women chief for queen mothers.

The respondents were asked to give reasons why they had queen mothers in the past or did not. The respondents who said they did have queen mothers in the past in their areas assigned these various reasons for their answer. The table below shows the distribution of the reasons for yes responses.

**Table 3.2: The Distribution of Reasons for Having Queen mothers in the Past**

<b>Reasons for Having Queen mothers in the Past</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Their Position is a Traditional Requirement	114	12.7
They are From the Royal Family	53	5.9
They Assist the Chief in the Governance of the Area	52	5.8
They are Born to Serve as Women Leaders	44	4.9
They Mobilize Woman for Developmental Activities and Handle their Issues	34	3.8
They Support in the Maintenance of Culture	11	1.2
Any other	16	1.8
Don't Know	3	0.3
No Response	3	0.3
Not Applicable	570	63.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above captures vividly the reasons why there were queen mothers in the past in the traditional areas of respondents who said yes. The table shows that the five most important reasons why there were queen mothers in the past in some traditional areas as follows; 114 respondents (12.7 per cent) believed because their position is a traditional requirement; 53 respondents (5.9 per cent) said because the queen mothers were from the royal family; 52 respondents (5.8 per cent) also believed there were queen mothers in the past because they assisted the chiefs in the governance of their area. Another 44 respondents (4.9 per cent) believed the queen mothers were born to serve as women leaders while 34 respondents (3.8 per cent) also thought there were queen mothers in the past in their areas because they mobilize woman for developmental activities and handle their issues. These were put forward among others while 570 (63.3 per cent) also indicated that the question was not applicable to them. For those who said they did not have queen mother in the past, the table below displays the distribution of their reasons.

**Table 3.3: Distribution of Reasons Why There Were no Queen mothers in the Traditional Areas of Respondents (General Public)**

<b>Reasons Why There Were no Queen mother in the Traditional Areas of Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Reasons in the Past</b>	
Customs and Tradition Do Not Permit the Queen mother Pposition	443 49.2
Woman Are Not Good Leader / Not Courageous	24 2.7
As Wives, Woman are Not Permanent Members of the Family	15 1.7
The Gods of the Land Forbid the Queen mother Position	12 1.3
The Authority of the Area Should Reside Only in the Male Chief	11 1.1
The Role of the Queen mother Will Conflict With Other Roles of the Woman	2 0.2
Any Other	44 4.9
Don't Know	10 1.1
Not Applicable	330 36.7
No Response	9 1.0

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Here again the table shows the distribution of the reasons for non existence of queen mother in the traditional areas of some respondent in the past. The main reason for the non-existence in the past of queen mother in some traditional areas was that customs and traditional do not permit the queen mother position; 443 respondents (49.2 per cent) said so; 24 respondents (2.7 per cent) also said they did not have queen mothers in the past because woman were not good leaders and they were not also courageous. Another major reason was that as wives, women were not permanent members of the family. They said these among other while 330 respondents (36.7 per cent) said the question was not applicable to them. From the opinion of persons with specialized knowledge there were queen mothers in the past in some traditional areas for these reasons. Twelve (12) respondents (12.0 per cent) of the 100 respondent sampled from this category observed that they had queen mothers in the past in their traditional areas because they were from the royal family; 10 respondents (10.0 per cent) also said queen mother existed in their traditional areas in the past because their position was a traditional requirement.

A further 8 respondents (8.0 per cent) indicated that they did have queen mother in the past because they assist the chief in the governance of the areas. Two reasons, the fact that queen mother are born to serve as leader of woman and that they mobilize woman for developmental activities and handle their issues attracted five respondents (5.0 per cent) each. Queen mothers are also thought to support in the maintenance of culture and two (2) respondents (2.0 per cent) said so while one (1) respondent (1.0 per cent) also indicated the question was not applicable to them.

Some respondent also said they did not have queen mother in their traditional areas. The reason they put forward for that situation are as follows. The major reason is that customs and traditions do not permit the queen mother position and 34 respondents (34.0 per cent) of this category indicated so; 10 respondents (10.0 per cent) also observed that the concept of queen mother was not part of their tradition.

Some respondents also said woman cannot be chief and therefore they have no queen mothers in the past and two (2) respondents (2.0 per cent) held that view. Woman are not warriors is another reason why there were no queen mothers in their traditional areas in the past and two (2) respondents (2.0 per cent) observed so while 43 respondents (43.0 per cent) said the question was not applicable to them with 20 respondent (20.0 per cent) declining to state any reasons.

### **3.1.4 The Magajia**

The magajia is another important female leader in Northern Ghana. There are no laid down criteria for nominating or appointing a magajia into office as well as no official election involving several candidates. There are diverging opinions on the appointing or selection of a magajia into office while some believe that a magajia needed the majority consent or endorsement of other women to be appointed, others also claim that the community chief chooses his favorite candidate to represent women.

These claims of the appointment of a magajia notwithstanding it is generally believed that a magajia is usually an elderly woman chosen by the chief based on certain qualities she possesses. The concept of magajia seems to pervade the Northern sector as it is one leadership position that cuts across all the three Northern regions. It is believed that she together with the woman chief mobilizes woman for development activities in the north.

This notwithstanding, it is likely to find some traditional areas without this female leadership position in their traditional setup. The study consequently, moved on to find out whether respondents have magajia in their areas.

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In order to establish whether the respondents have magajia in their respective areas, they were asked “Do you have a magajia in your traditional area?”

To this question a majority of the respondents from the general public, 737(81.9 per cent) said there are magajias in their traditional areas while 161 respondents (17.9 per cent) also indicated that they do not have magajias in their traditional areas with only two(2) respondents (2 per cent) offering no answers. Out of the 100 opinion leaders who were sampled for the study, 82 (82 per cent) affirmed that they have magajias in their areas with 18 respondents (18.0 per cent) also observing that they do not have magajia in their traditional areas.

The question as to whether there are magajias in the traditional areas of respondents was looked at from the perspective of people with specialized or in-depth knowledge on customs and traditions of their areas. Out of the 100 persons with expert or specialized knowledge category, 88 respondents (88.0 per cent) stated that they have magajia in their respective areas while 12 respondents (12.0 per cent) also observed that they do not have magajia in their traditional areas.

The data show that indeed, the magajia is one of the important female leadership positions that cuts across the three northern regions as pointed out earlier in the write up. The responses from the respondents from the general public as well as those from the specialized knowledge categories point clearly to this fact .However, it is also clear that few traditional areas do not have magajia leadership position in their traditional areas.

This is also evidenced by the few respondents from both the general public and specialized knowledge who indicated they do not have magajia in their traditional areas.

### **Roles Magajias Play in their Traditional Areas**

Every leadership position goes with the performance of certain roles or functions .The magajia is also expected to perform some roles or functions in the traditional areas. The respondents were consequently asked to state the roles a magajia plays in their traditional areas.

According to the data, mobilization of women for developmental activities is a major role of magajias in the traditional areas .Out of the 900 respondents from the general public including opinion leaders, 712(79.1 per cent) respondents said magajias mobilize women for developmental activities in the traditional areas; 571 respondents (63.4 per cent) also observed that magajias lead women groups in organizing funerals, marriages, festivals and important occasions.

Another role of a magajia according to the data is that she forms associations to support women financially and 525 respondents (58.3 per cent) indicated that magajias form associations to support women financially in their traditional areas. Settlement of disputes is one major role of women leaders in the northern Ghana. For this role 360 respondents (40.00 per cent) were of the view that the role of a magajia is the settlement of disputes. Then any other, also attracted 17 respondents (1.9 per cent).

The views of the 100 opinion leaders of the general public were also sought on the issue of roles magajias play in the traditional areas. From the data, 81 respondents (81.0 per cent) believed that the major role of a magajia is the mobilization of women for developmental activities. The second major role of a magajia according to the data is leading women groups in organizing funerals, marriages, festivals, and other important occasions. Another key role of a magajia is formation of associations to support

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women financially and 64 respondents (64.0 per cent) of this category of respondents observed that the role of magajia is to form associations to support women financially. Yet another 47 respondents (47.0 per cent) also indicated that the role of a magajia is to settle disputes and for any other, three (3) respondents mentioned other roles.

From the perspective of persons with specialized knowledge on customs and traditions, 84 respondents (84.0 per cent) out of the 100 persons sampled from that category, said a magajia mobilizes women for developmental activities. Here again, the second most important role of a magajia is that she leads women groups in organizing funerals, marriages, festivals and important occasions and 68 respondents (68.0 per cent) indicated that. Yet another key role of a magajia is the settlement of disputes and 43 respondents (43 per cent) said so while three respondents (3.0 per cent) mentioned some other roles.

From the data, it is quite clear that all three categories of respondents are unanimous on the roles of magajias in their traditional areas. The data reveal that all three categories believed that the most important role of a magajia is the mobilization of women for developmental activities. This was followed by leading women groups in organizing funerals, marriages, festivals and important occasions. The third key role all categories were unanimous on is that magajias form associations to support women financially. This role of a magajia came out prominently during the fact finding tour by some officers of the department on the subject. The fourth key role of a magajia according to the data is the settlement of disputes. Here again there is a general consensus from all three categories of respondents on this role. This therefore means that there is no contention about the roles magajias play in the traditional area of the northern sector of Ghana.

### **Whether the Concept of Magajia Has Always Been Part of their Traditional System**

There is a diverging opinion on the introduction of the system of magajia in the northern part of Ghana. According to Mr. Yusiff Akulugu, Assistant Registrar of the Upper East Regional House of Chiefs, in the past, magajias were known in the various traditional areas but they were not recognized as chiefs. The magajia system came after independence and during the era of the CPP. He said the magajias were brought in to organise their women folks. They were selected on how active and vocal they were. Again, according to Madam Ansariata (Gender Desk Officer of the Wa Municipal Assembly), the concept of female leadership started with magajia in the past but was associated with political parties but in the traditional setting. Magajias according to her were organizing women for durbars, communal labour and creating platforms for deliberations. However, others also held that the position of magajia was long in the north before the coming of the Europeans subsequent to the introduction of party politics. This group held that there were women who were playing the role of magajia in the past but the introduction of party politics, indeed CPP and subsequent parties only heightened the roles of magajia and popularized them.

The study therefore sought to find out whether magajias have always been part of the traditional system. To this question, as many as 518 respondents (57.6 per cent) out of the 900 persons sampled from the general public said magajias have always been part of their traditional areas. However, 377 respondents (41.9 per cent) also observed that magajias have not always been part of their traditional areas with five (5) respondents offering no answer.

The views of the 100 opinion leaders sampled from the general public were split on this issue. Whereas 51 respondents (51 per cent) of this category said there have always been magajias in the traditional areas, 49 respondents (49 per cent) also stated that magajias have not always been part of their traditional areas.

Looking at the position of the 100 persons with specialized knowledge on customs and traditions, the data show a majority decision. Here, 64 respondents (64.0 per cent) held that the concept of magajia has always been part of their traditional system while 35 respondents (35.0 per cent) also believed that the concept of the magajia has not always been part of their traditional system with one (1) respondent (1.0 per cent) declining to answer.

Granted that 64 out of 100 persons with in-depth knowledge on customs and traditions of their respective traditional areas held the view that the concept of magajia has always been part of their traditional system together with a majority of 57.6 per cent of the respondents from the general public holding the same view, it could safely be deduced from the data that the concept of magajia has always been part of the traditional system of the Northern part of Ghana. This seems to support the views of those who held that the concept of magajia was long part of the traditional system before the coming of the Europeans to the Northern part subsequent to the introduction of party politics. It follows therefore that some women were playing the roles of magajia and that party political activities only helped in heightening and perhaps popularizing their roles.

### 3.1.5 Other Leadership Roles Played By Women

In the Northern Sector of Ghana, women played and continue to play some other leadership roles in traditional governance other than the roles of a Women Chief, female Tindana, Queen mother and Magajia. Below is a table showing the distribution of responses on the other leadership roles women played in traditional governance system.

**Table 3.4 Distribution of other leadership roles played by women in Traditional Governance (General Public)**

<b>Other Leadership Roles Played By Women In Tradition Governance</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Facilitates other community activities	294	32.7
Mobilize women for developmental activities/form associations to mobilize the women for financial support	216	24.0
Advise the chief and is the representative of women in the community / maintain the culture of the community	133	14.8
Assist in organizing chiefs funeral	38	4.2
Organize the processing, storage and marketing of farm produce	25	2.8
Assist in installing of a chief	17	1.9
Act as traditional birth attendant	10	1.1
Any other	67	7.4
Don't know	54	6.0
No response	46	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table above shows the opinion of the respondents from the general public on the other leadership roles that women play in traditional governance in the various traditional areas of the Northern Ghana. The most important other leadership role in the opinion of respondents of the general public is the facilitation of other community activities and as many as 294 respondents (32.7 per cent) said so. Another 216 respondents (24.0 per cent) from the general public also indicated that women mobilize other women for developmental activities as well as organize or form association to mobilize women for financial support.

Yet another 133 respondents (14.8 per cent) were also of the view that the leadership role women play in traditional governance is that they advise the chief and are the representative of women in the community/maintain the culture of community. Women are also said to assist in the organization of chief's funeral as a leadership role and 38 respondents (4.2 per cent) said this. Another leadership role by women is the organization of women for the processing, storage and marketing of farm produce and this attracted 25 respondents (2.8 per cent). These are among the other leadership roles that women play in traditional governance. The above table says it all.

The views of the 100 opinion leaders sampled as part of the general public also follow the same trend as the entire general public. Here again, facilitation of the community activities was mentioned as the first other leadership roles played by women in traditional governance and 38 respondents (38.0) said so. Mobilization of women for developmental activities / formation of associations to mobilize women for financial support came second with 22 respondents (22.0 per cent) and then another 13 respondents (13.0 per cent) said that women advise the chief and are the representatives of women in the community / maintain the culture of the community.

The views of opinion leaders on the other roles women play in traditional governance follow the pattern of the general public.

The table below shows the distribution of other leadership roles played by women in traditional governance by specialized knowledge category.

**Table 3.5: Other Leadership Roles Played by Women in Traditional Governance System**

<b>Other Leadership Roles Played by Women in Traditional Governance System</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Facilitates Other Community Activities	32	32.0
Mobilize Women for Developmental Activities / Form Associations to Mobilize Women for Financial Support	30	30.0
Advise the Chief /Representative of Women in the Community /Maintain the Culture of the Community	13	13.0
Organize the Processing, Storage and Marketing of Farm Produce	5	5.0
Assist in Organizing Chiefs Funeral	4	4.0
Assist in the Installation of a Chief	3	3.0
Act as Traditional Birth Attendant	1	1.0
Any Other	4	4.0
Don't Know	2	2.0
No Response	6	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data shows complete agreement of opinion on the other leadership roles played by women in traditional governance by all two categories of respondents sampled for the study.

The two tables from both the general public and the specialized knowledge categories show unanimity in opinion on the roles and the rank ordering of importance thus portraying virtual agreement. There is no disagreement on any of the roles by any of the categories.

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The conclusion therefore is that the other leadership roles listed by the two tables on the issue are truly the other leadership roles played by women in traditional governance in the Northern part of Ghana.

### **3.2 Economic Roles Played By Women**

In the Ghanaian Traditional setting and for that matter the Northern sector gender roles are very clear. In the household or family, certain roles are assigned to men and women. The men provide solid food and women the ingredients for the food. Women are also the caretakers of the home and nurturers of the children. They are therefore house keepers. The woman's place therefore it is said is the kitchen, catering for the home, nurturing of children and fetching of water. They also help their husbands on the farms by sowing and harvesting.

Women apart from their traditional role as home makers also play very important economic roles in the traditional setting of Northern Ghana. They help in growing the economy by way of trading, farming and other activities.

#### **3.2.1 Economic Roles Women Played in the Past**

Below are the economic roles that women played in the past as identified by the respondents?

The data reveal Shea butter extracting as the most important economic activity women engaged in, in the past. 791 respondents (87.9 per cent) of the general public believed that Shea butter extraction is the number one economic activity women in the northern sector engaged in, in the past. Farming is another economic activity that attracted a high number of women in the past. Here 702 respondents (78.0 per cent) of the general public category said so. Home making also featured prominently as an economic role and 669 respondents (74.3 per cent) were also of the view that home making was an economic role women played in the past. Trading is an age old economic role and the data shows that 553 respondents (61.4 per cent) also believed that trading was one of the major economic roles women played in the past in their traditional areas. Weaving is another important economic activity women engage in, in the Northern sector only few women participate in it thus 96 respondents (10.7 per cent) out the 900 respondents sampled from the general public said so. Finally, 100 respondents (11.1 per cent) also mentioned other economic activities.

The views of the opinion leaders sampled out of the 900 general public, categories are not any different. The order of importance of the economic activities engaged in by women in the past remains the same except that here Home making came second in order of importance instead of farming. Thus, 90 respondents (90 per cent) mentioned Shea butter extraction; 85 respondents (85.0 per cent) indicated home making while 79 respondents (79.0 per cent) also mentioned farming as the economic roles women played in the past. The rest followed in the same trend of the general public respondents.

From the perspective of the persons with specialized knowledge, farming is the number one economic activity women engaged in, in the past. The data reveal 82 respondents (82.0 per cent) of this category saying so. The second most important economic role in the past played by women is Shea butter extraction. The data reveal that 81 respondents (81.0 per cent) mentioned Shea butter extracting as the second most important economic role played by women in the past. Home making featured here again prominently as an economic role played by women in the past and here 79 respondents (79.0 per cent) were of this opinion. Trading as pointed out earlier, is an age old economic activity and 67 respondents (67.0 per cent) of this category saw it as an important economic roles played by women in the past with weaving following with 36 respondents (36.0 per cent) of specialized knowledge category also listing weaving as an economic activity women engaged in, in the past.

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Here again, fishing is seen as a minor economic activity of women in the past thus, only 11 respondents (11.0 per cent) listed it as such with 12 respondents (12.0 per cent) also listing others. There is again a slight change in the order of importance of the roles. Whereas the general public respondents listed Shea butter extraction as the most prominent economic role played by women in the past, respondents with the specialized knowledge mentioned farming as such. But apart from this change in order of importance, the general trend is the same for both categories. One role respondents of both category put at the third place is Home making. One wonders whether home making is an activity that brought in an income, profit or dividend in the past. This issue is raised because both categories listed it as the number three economic activity of women in the past.

### **3.2.2 Economic Roles Currently Played by Women**

Roles that people play in society change overtime. People take on new roles either to complement existing ones or take over from existing roles.

The study therefore in a bid to ascertain as it were, whether women in the northern sector have taken on new economic roles over the years asked the respondents to indicate current economic roles women are playing.

From the opinion of respondents from the general public women have currently become traders and business women and 767 respondents (85.2 per cent) said this while 732 respondents (81.3 per cent) also believed that currently many more women are into farming. A further 611 respondents (67.9 per cent) also are of the view that currently women have taken on teaching or lecturing roles while 530 respondents (58.9 per cent) observed that many women are currently homemakers.

Again, 516 respondents (57.3 per cent) indicated that the current economic role played by women is that they have become public servants. To another 370 respondents (41.1 per cent) the current economic role of women is schooling thus many more women are currently becoming students while 273 respondents (30.3 per cent) believed that currently women are becoming artisans. Finally, 92 respondents (10.2 per cent) said currently women are going fishing with 79 respondents (8.7 per cent) indicating others.

The data reveal that the views of the opinion leaders category on the current economic roles of women in the Northern sector follow the trend of the rank ordering of the current economic roles of the entire general public from which this category was sampled.

From the perspective of persons with specialized or in-depth knowledge Farming remains the number one economic activity of women in the Northern sector currently and 85 respondents (85.0 per cent) said so. Following farming in the opinion of the specialized category said women are currently becoming traders and businesswomen; Home making still remains prominent and 53 respondents (53.0 per cent) observed the current economic roles of women is home making.

Teaching/lectureship has also assumed prominence in the current economic roles of women and here 50 respondents (50 per cent) observed that women are currently becoming teachers and lectures. Yet another 46 respondents (46.0 per cent) said women are currently becoming public servants while 32 respondents (32.0 per cent) also observed that the current economic role women are taking on is schooling.

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Artisanship is also fast catching up with women in the North and 23 respondents (23.0 per cent) believed that women are currently becoming artisans. However, 8 respondents (8.0 per cent) still believe that current economic role of women is fishing with 12 respondents (12.0 per cent) also indicating others.

The data reveal that there is general agreement on the current economic roles played by women in the opinion of both general public and specialized knowledge respondents. The only point of disagreement is the position of trading/business and farming. Whereas the general public respondents believe that currently more women are going into trading or business, the respondents with specialized knowledge also believed that women are currently still into farming more than business or trading. From the data, 767 respondents (85.2 per cent) out of the 900 respondents sampled from the general public believed that currently many more women are involved in trading or business whereas 85 respondents (85.0 per cent) from the specialized knowledge category also believed that currently many more women are still into farming.

Looking at the percentage margin, it is clear that it is one's word against the other. It only means that more women are still farming just as many more are taking to trading and business.

One economic role that is conspicuously missing in the list of current economic roles is Shea Butter extraction. This is missing in the lists of respondents of the general public and specialized knowledge categories. One wonders what could have accounted for this. Could it be that women in the North are no longer engaged in Shea Butter extraction for a living or a sheer oversight? Could it be that Shea Butter extraction has been put under artisanship?

### **3.3 Changes in Traditional Roles of Women**

The traditional role of women in the past is housekeeping which are the maintenance of the home, catering for the home, nurturing of children and taking care of her husband. Thus, it is said that the woman's place is the kitchen. The women also help their husbands on the farm by sowing and harvesting among others.

It is however anticipated that over time there could be changes in the traditional roles of women in the three Northern regions just as it was the situation in the economic roles of women.

The study consequently sought the views of persons with specialized knowledge on whether there have been changes in the traditional roles of women and what might have accounted for the changes if there were any such changes.

To the question whether there have been changes in the traditional roles of women, 84 respondents (84.0 per cent) of the specialized group category answered in the affirmative while 16 respondents (16.0 per cent) observed otherwise.

#### **3.3.1 What Accounted for Changes in the Traditional Roles of Women**

For those who observed that there have been changes in the traditional roles of women, the study asked them to indicate what has accounted for the change. To this question, 28 respondents (28.0 per cent) of the 100 persons with specialized knowledge for study indicated the change was due to civilization and modernity. Another 22 respondents (22.0 per cent) also observed the change was due to education.

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Advocacy, sensitization and public education on women's issues and rights were seen as issues accounting for changes in the traditional roles of women and 11 respondents (11.0 per cent) of this category believed so.

Women hitherto could not create wealth and acquire properties because they are seen as properties of their husbands. It is said that a property cannot own property. However, that trend is changing. Therefore, 11 respondents (11.0 per cent) observed that the one thing that accounted for the change in the traditional roles of women was that women could now create wealth and acquire properties.

The data further show that the change in the traditional roles of women is due to the fact that women are now in paid employment and 6 respondents (6.0 per cent) observed that. Promotion of girl child education was identified as a factor accounting for a change in the traditional roles of women. Here, one (1) respondent (1.0 per cent) believed while 7 other respondents (7.0 per cent) also indicated others with two (2) respondents (2.0 per cent) saying they did not know what accounted for the change in the traditional roles of women in the Northern sector of Ghana. This question however was not applicable to 16 respondents (16.0 per cent) who said there was no change in the traditional roles of women in the North in their opinion.

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## Chapter 4

### Assessing General Participation Of Women In Governance

#### 4.0 Introduction

Proper gender parity involves an enabling environment for women to contribute vigorously in decision making processes affecting their lives. Women’s participation in decision making at the traditional, district, regional and national level will contribute in diverse ways in building the nation. Women over the years have showed skilled leadership ability and given the chance can bring a gender perspective to good governance and community development.

In Northern Ghana, the participation of women in governance has not been elaborated because of the perceived non-recognition of the traditional leadership roles of women. This section of the report therefore assesses the general participation of women in traditional governance, district assembly elections, parliamentary elections and the state, as a whole.

#### 4.1 Women in Traditional Governance

When respondents were asked to assess the general participation of women in traditional governance in their traditional area, all the three categories of respondents had over forty per cent of them assessing the participation to be low. Twenty per cent and over stated the participation to be high and very low. Less than ten per cent of the respondents said the participation is very high. The result is shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: General Participation of Women in Traditional Governance**

<b>Assessing General Participation of Type of Respondent</b>			
<b>Women in Traditional Governance</b>	<b>General Opinion</b>		<b>Specialized Knowledge</b>
	<b>Public</b>	<b>Leaders</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
Very High	29	8	6
% Within Type of Respondent	3.6 %	8 %	6 %
High	208	28	31
% Within Type of Respondent	26%	28 %	31 %
Low	348	44	43
% Within Type of Respondent	43.5 %	44 %	43 %
Very Low	215	20	20
% Within Type of Respondent	26.9 %	20 %	20 %
Total	800	100	100
% Within Type of Respondent	100 %	100 %	100 %

An analysis within the region of interview indicates that; of the Opinion Leaders, 45.5 per cent (25) of respondents from the Northern region said the participation of women in traditional governance in their traditional area was low. This was followed by 23.6 per cent (13) and 20 per cent (11) of respondents in this region who mentioned very low and high respectively. Only 6 (10.9 per cent) of them said the

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participation was very high. In the Upper East region, 44 per cent (11) of the respondents from the region said the participation was high, 36 per cent (9) mentioned low and 20 per cent (5) said very low. None of the respondents from this region mentioned the participation to be very high. Half of the respondents from the Upper West region said the participation was low, 30 per cent (6) said high and 10 per cent (2) mentioned very high and very low concurrently.

With the members of the Specialized Knowledge however, of the respondents from the Northern region, 41.8 per cent mentioned low, followed by 30.9 per cent high, 20 per cent very low and 7.3 per cent very high. From the Upper East region, 40 per cent said low, 36 per cent high, 16 per cent very low and 8 per cent very high. In the Upper West region, 50 per cent of the respondents said low, 25 per cent mentioned high and very low respectively. None of the respondents from the region assessed the women's participation to be very high.

Of the General Public, a cross tabulation of region of interview with assessing the general participation of women in traditional governance in the traditional area revealed that of respondents from the Northern region, 191 (42.9 per cent) mentioned the participation to be high, 128 (28.8 per cent) very low, 110 (24.7 per cent) high and 16 (3.6 per cent) very high. In the Upper East region 100 (51.3 per cent) also mentioned low, 49 (25.1 per cent) very low, 38 (19.5 per cent) high and only 8 (4.1 per cent) said very high. For the Upper West region, 60 (37.5 per cent) said high, 57 (35.6 per cent) low, 38 (23.8 per cent) very low and 5 (3.1 per cent) very high.

In all categories of respondents, those who said the participation of women in traditional governance were low and very low across the regional distribution were proportionately higher than respondents who mentioned high and very high. From the respondents, it is evident that the participation of women in traditional governance in the various traditional areas is low.

A cross section of the sex of respondents shows that of the people with Specialized Knowledge, 19 (42.2 per cent) of the female respondents rated the participation to be low, followed by 33.3 per cent (15) who rated it to be high, 9(20 per cent) very low and only 2 (4.4 per cent) of the female respondents rated it to be very high. The male respondents within this group of interviewees, also followed a similar trend as that of the females, 24(43.6 per cent) said low, 16 (29.1 per cent) high, 11 (20 per cent) very low and 4 (7.3 per cent) very high.

The male respondents of the Opinion Leaders category had 23(48.9 per cent) for low, 9 (19.1 per cent) very low, 9 (19.1 per cent) high and 6 (12.8 per cent) very high as their responses. The female on the other hand recorded the figure 21 (39.6 per cent) for low, 19(35.8 per cent) high, 11 (20.8 per cent) very low and 2(3.8 per cent) very high.

With the General Public, the female respondents had 193 (45.7 per cent) for low, 112 (25.6 per cent) very low, 102 (24.2 per cent) high and 15 (3.6 per cent) very high. The males had 155 (41 per cent) low, 106(28 per cent) high, 103 (27.2 per cent) very low and 14 (3.7 per cent) very high.

#### **4.1.1 Reasons for the Assessment**

Of the various assessments given, the respondents were further asked to give reasons why they think the participation was very high, high, low or very low.

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### **(a) Very High and High Reasons**

A high percentage of respondents among all the three types of respondents were of the view that women help in decision making. They cited that women were mostly the representatives in settling disputes and advising the chief on certain important matters. Some of the respondents also said women do take decision in the selection of a new chief.

This group was followed were respondents who said women contribute to developmental activities. And all the categories of respondents attested to this fact. It is evident that in the Northern part of the country, developmental activities such as the sanitation works, road works and molding of houses are undertaken by women.

Another reason given was that women oversee the welfare of children. This includes their upbringing, education and health. It is the woman's responsibility that the child grows to become a morally upright person.

Also, women are those who organize marriages, funerals and festivals in the community. It is said that without the women all these cannot take place. She is the one who arranges and sees to it that everything is in place, for such events to take place. Furthermore, all categories of respondents stated that women assist in religious activities of the community.

Some respondents of the general public and opinion leaders added that women enhance the beauty and cultural aspect of funerals. They held the belief that during important functions, women dress to look beautiful and their presence alone beautifies the occasion. They hail the occasion by singing, dancing or crying, whatever the demands be.

Another important point by these groups of respondents was that the participation of women in traditional governance is high and very high because their women are enskined as queen mothers. A well-defined role has been assigned to women hence their great involvement in the traditional governance of their area. Certain individuals of the specialized knowledge also added that women do support each other for financial stability. They form co-operatives to support each other and also seek financial support. They also generate funds to support the family.

### **(b) Low and Very Low Reasons**

From the findings, tradition, customs and religion do not permit women to be leaders and that accounted for majority of the responses for the low and very low reasons for the participation of women in traditional governance in the traditional area. With tradition, respondents believed that culturally a woman is considered to be unclean and cannot perform sacrifices due to her menstrual cycle. Also, women are not consulted on decision making, even on issues that do concern them. They are seen as not part of the family since they will one day marry and go to their husbands' house and there too, wives are not seen as part of their husbands' family. In effect, women as wives are seen to have no homes in the traditional setting. It is also perceived by the Islamic religion that women are not allowed to lead, especially in public reading of the Quran and prayers. In addition, some respondents had the notion that traditionally, the place of the woman is the kitchen and workload is too much on women to involve in the governance of the area. Workload according to the respondents includes; household chores, upbringing of children and looking after the family. 491(61.4 per cent) of the members of the General Public, 58(58 per cent) of the Opinion leaders and 31(31 per cent) of Specialized knowledge individuals mentioned this point.

Lack of self-confidence on the part of women was also seen as a contributory factor. Women according

to the findings were seen as the weaker sex, not capable and courageous to lead. Women are seen to have a low self-esteem and therefore could not take up such important leadership positions in the traditional setting.

Moreover, respondents made mention of the fact that the low educational background of women was a major constraint. This is due to the high illiteracy and ignorance level of women.

Lastly lack of support from men, this is where the male counterparts or husbands do not permit their wives to engage in any leadership roles. Also, the respondents were of the view that the men fear to give leadership roles to women due to the fact that the women will become very powerful and disobedient. Is this a mere myth made to be believed or is it rather that the men fear that women would be very good at leading and might take away the leadership title (a belief that men are the head) from them.

Other reasons given by respondents were that the leadership roles of women are not well spelt out since they do not have a well-defined role and this contribute to their low participation in traditional governance. Even though women are seen in the majority of the population, women are said not to be united and like back biting and gossiping.

## 4.2 Women in District Assembly Elections

It is the wish of government to increase the level of participation among women in the district assembly elections.

**Table 4.2: Assessment of General Participation of Women in the District Assembly Elections Over the Years**

Assessment of General Participation of Women in the District Assembly Elections Over the Years		Type of Respondent		
		General Public Leaders	Public Knowledge	Opinion Specialized Individuals
<b>Very High</b>	20	8	2	
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>		2.5 %	8 %	2 %
<b>High</b>	98	14	14	
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>		12.2 %	14 %	14 %
<b>Low</b>	413	49	54	
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>		51.6 %	49 %	54 %
<b>Very Low</b>	265	29	30	
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>		33.1 %	29 %	30 %
<b>No Response</b>	4	0	0	
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>		0.5 %	0 %	0 %
<b>Total</b>	800	100	100	
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>		100 %	100 %	100 %

The table above depicts the similarity among the three groups of respondents. Comparatively, analysis reveals that majority of the respondents said the participation of women in the district assembly elections

over the years has been low. 54 per cent of individuals with specialized knowledge, 49 per cent of Opinion leaders and 51.6 per cent of the general public mentioned so.

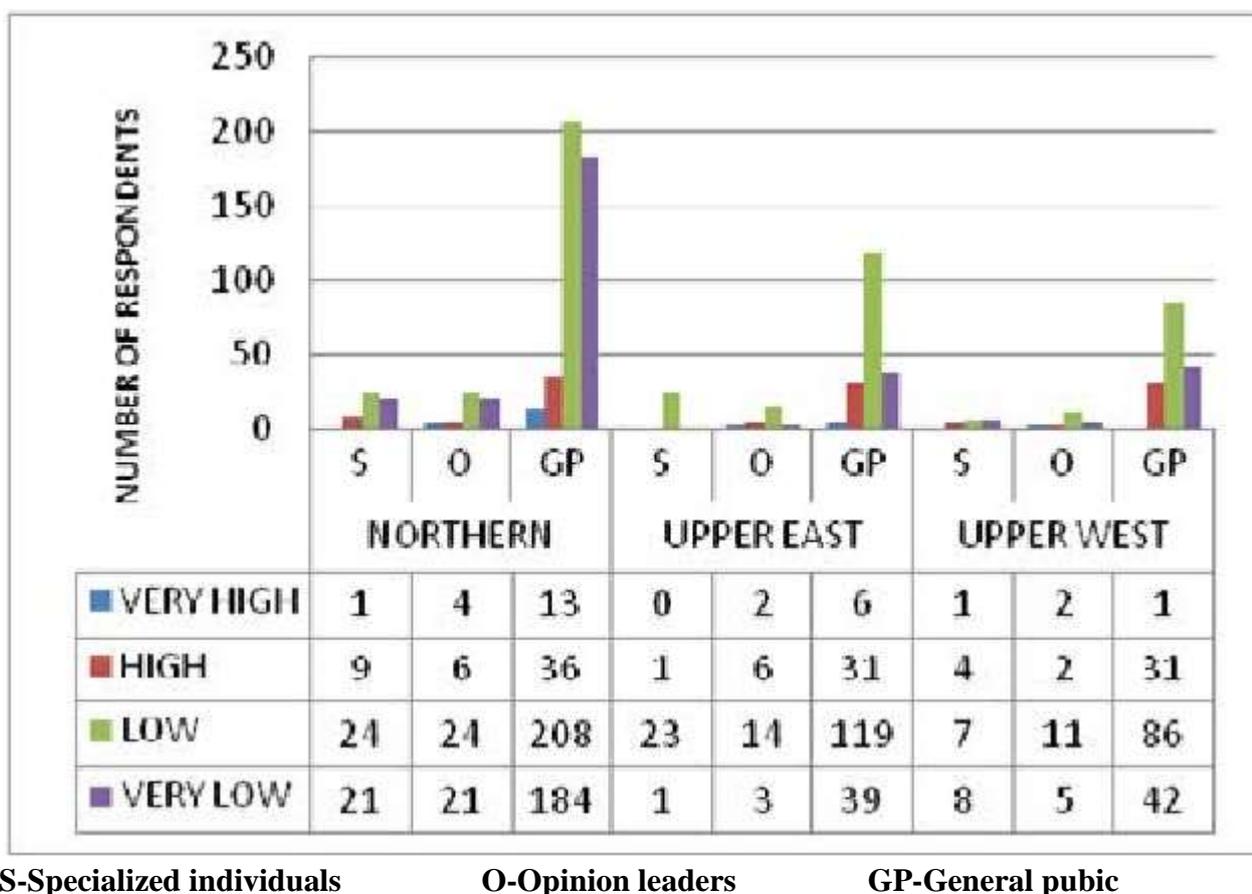
A similar trend went for respondents who mentioned very low, high and very high; where 30 per cent of the individuals with specialized knowledge, 29 per cent of the opinion leaders and 33.1 per cent of the general public stated the participation to be very low.

For respondents who mentioned high, 14 per cent of individuals with specialized knowledge, 14 per cent of the opinion leaders and 12.2 per cent of the general public asserted to this fact.

A low percentage in all categories of respondents went for very high; they represented 2 per cent of individuals with specialized knowledge, 8 per cent of opinion leaders and 2.5 per cent of the general public.

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of Assessment of General Participation of Women in the District Assembly Elections Over the Years With Region of Respondents

**Figure 4.1: Assessing General Participation of Women in District Assembly Elections Over the Years With Region of Respondents**



Comparatively, with the exception of individuals with specialized knowledge from the Upper West Region, all the rest had a greater proportion of the respondents saying the participation of women in the elections was low. Followed were respondents who said very low, high and very high.

It is only in the case of opinion leaders from the Upper East Region where a number of the respondents mentioned low, followed by those who mentioned high, very low and very high. The individuals with the specialized knowledge from the Upper West Region however, had a greater percentage saying the participation was very low followed by low, high and very high.

A careful analysis with the sex of respondents shows clear similar pattern. With the three categories of respondents, a relatively high number of them said the participation of women in the district assembly elections was low, followed by those who said very low, high and very high.

Examining the individuals with specialized knowledge depicts that 93.3 per cent of those who said the participation of women in the district assembly elections was very low were 40 years and above, and 87 per cent of those who said low were also within the age group 40 years and above.

In the case of the opinion leaders, of respondents who mentioned low, 93.8 per cent of them were 30 years and above. For those who said very low, 86.2 per cent of them were 30 years and over. Of the general public, over 70 per cent of the respondents who mentioned low and very low were above 30 years.

### 4.3 Women in Parliamentary Elections

Currently, the Parliament of Ghana has only nineteen (representing 8 per cent of the total number of 230 parliamentarians) parliamentarians being women. The Northern part of Ghana, out of this figure has only two women parliamentarians one each from the Northern and Upper West regions. The last parliament saw six women parliamentarians from Northern Ghana out of the twenty-five women parliamentarians. The first, second and third Parliaments of the Fourth Republic however, saw one, four and three women parliamentarians respectively from Northern Ghana. It is for this reason that respondents were asked to assess the participation of women in the parliamentary elections.

**Table 4.3: Assessment of General Participation of Women in the Parliamentary Elections Over the Years**

Assessment of General Participation of Women in the Parliamentary Elections Over the Years	Type of Respondent		
	General Public	Opinion Leaders	Specialized Knowledge Individuals
<b>Very High</b>	12	2	0
<b>% Within Tpe of Respondent</b>	1.5 per cent	2 per cent	0 per cent
<b>High</b>	57	10	5
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>	7.1 per cent	10 per cent	5 per cent
<b>Low</b>	324	42	48
<b>% Within Type of Respondent</b>	40.5 per cent	42 per cent	48 per cent
<b>Very Low</b>	400	46	46
<b>% ithin type of respondent</b>	50 per cent	46 per cent	46 per cent
<b>No Response</b>	7	0	1
<b>per cent within type of respondent</b>	0.9 per cent	0 per cent	1 per cent
<b>Total</b>	800	100	100
<b>per cent within type of respondent</b>	100 per cent	100 per cent	100 per cent

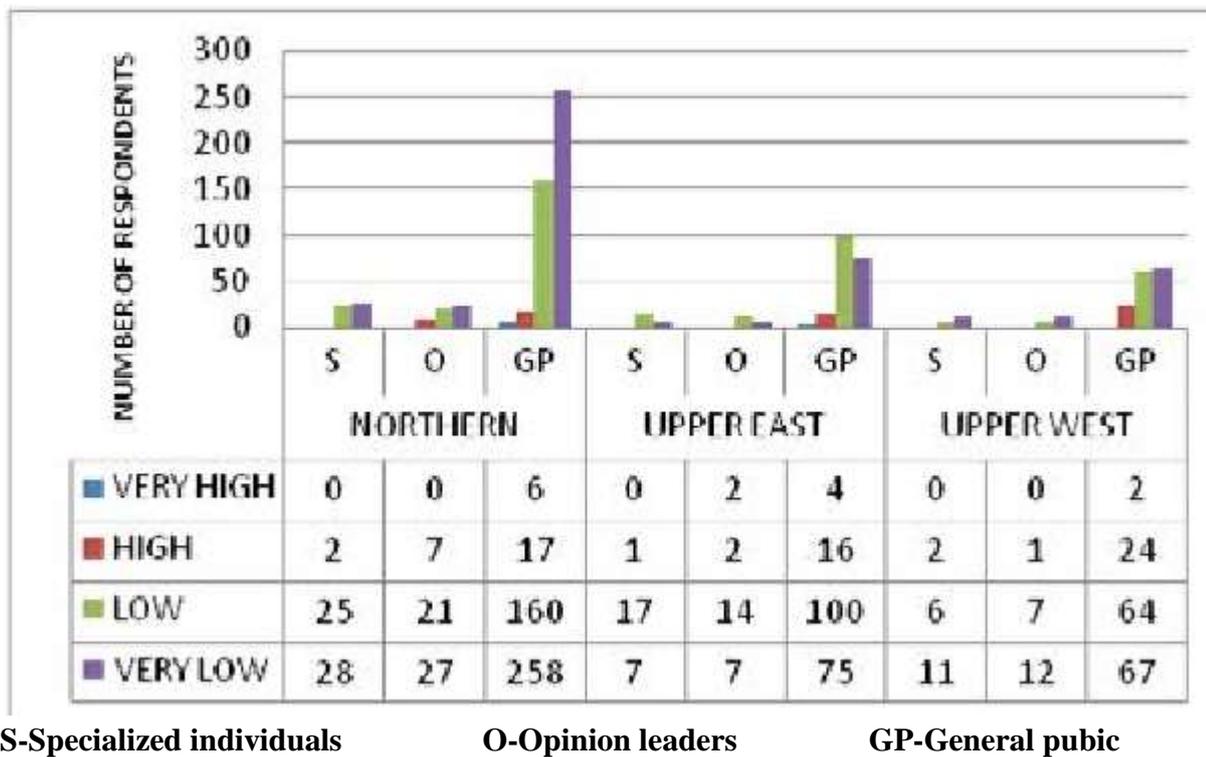
From members of the general public, it revealed that 400(50 per cent) respondents mentioned the participation of women in the parliamentary elections to be very low, followed by 324(40.5 per cent) low, 57 (7.1 per cent) high and 12 (1.5 per cent) very high.

A similar pattern evolved with the opinion leaders, 46(46 per cent) said very low, 42(42 per cent) low, 10 (10 per cent) high and 2 (2 per cent) very high.

For the individual with specialized knowledge however, none of them said the participation of women was very high. Only 5(5 per cent) said the participation was high, 46(46 per cent) said very low and 48(48 per cent) said low.

### 4.3.1 Cross Analysis of Region of Interview and Assessing General Participation of Women in the Parliamentary Election

**Figure 4.2: Assessing General Participation of Women in Parliamentary Elections Over the Years With Region of Respondents**



The figure above indicates that; of the individuals from the general public, 258(58 per cent) of the 445 respondents from the Northern Region said the participation of women was very low, followed by those who said low, 160 (36 per cent), high 17 (3.8 per cent) and very high 6 (1.3 per cent). Individuals from the Upper West also followed similar pattern in the reverse order with 67 (41.9 per cent) said very low, 64 (40 per cent) low, 24 (15 per cent) high and 2 (1.2 per cent) very high. In the Upper East region however, 100 (51.3 per cent) of them said low, 75 (38.5 per cent) very low, 16 (8.2 per cent) high and 4 (2.1 per cent) said very high.

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With the opinion leaders, 14 (56 per cent) of the respondents from the Upper East said low, whilst 12 (60 per cent) of respondents from the Upper West said very low. For the Northern region, 27 (49.1 per cent) of respondents said very low while 21 (38.2 per cent) said the participation was low. None of the opinion leaders from the Northern and Upper West regions mentioned the participation to be very high whilst 2 (8 per cent) from the Upper East said the participation was very high. The Upper East and Upper West had 2(8 per cent) and 1 (5 per cent) person respectively assessing the participation to be high and the Northern region 7 (12.7 per cent) persons assessed the participation to be high.

Of the individuals with specialized knowledge, from the Northern Region, 2(3.6 per cent) of them said the participation was high, 25 (45.5 per cent) low and 28 (50.9 per cent) said very low.

From the Upper East, 1 (4 per cent) of those from the region said high, 171 (68 per cent) low and 7(28 per cent) very low. In the Upper West, 2 (10 per cent) high, 6 (30 per cent) low and 11 (55 per cent of those in the region) said very low.

Overall, 80 per cent of respondents within the region of interview registered low and very low response for assessing the general participation of women in parliamentary elections.

Assessing with the sex of respondents, in the case of opinion leaders, 91.4 per cent of the 47 male opinion leaders interviewed were of the view that the participation of women in the parliamentary elections were low and very low. For the female opinion leaders, 84.9 per cent of them also stated the participation to be low and very low.

In the case of the general public, of the males within this category of respondents, 90.4 per cent stated low and very low when asked to assess the general participation of women in the parliamentary elections. For the specialized knowledge individuals, 94.5 per cent of male respondents and 93.3 per cent of female respondents said participation of women was low and very low.

#### **4.4 The State and Women**

Today, women in Ghana remain a demographic majority, representing 51.3 per cent of the population and contributing considerably to the development of the nation. This aspect of the chapter views the willingness of respondents to vote for a female candidate at any level of election and the role of the state towards the participation of women in governance.

##### **4.4.1 Willingness to vote for a Female Candidate**

When respondents were asked “Will you vote for a female candidate at any level of election”, a whopping majority of them said ‘Yes’. 91(91 per cent) of individuals with specialized knowledge, 95 (95 per cent) of opinion leaders and 713 (89.1 per cent) of the general public said ‘Yes’. For individuals who said ‘No’, 8 (8 per cent) were individuals from the specialized knowledge, 2 (2 per cent) opinion leaders and 83 (10.4 per cent) general public.

Only a small percentage of the respondents gave no response to the question with 1(1 per cent) of the individual with specialized knowledge, 3(3 per cent) opinion leaders and 4 (0.5 per cent) members of the general public. Results are shown in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Cross Tabulation of Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Level of Election With the Type of Respondents**

Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Type of Respondent Level of Election	General Public Opinion Leaders Specialized Knowledge Individual				
	Yes	713	95	91	
% Within Type of Respondent	89.1%	95%	91%		
No	83	2	8		
% Within Type of Respondent	10.4%	2%	8%		
No Response	4	3	1		
% Within Type of Respondent	0.5%	3%	1%		
Total	800	100	100		
% Within Type of Respondent	100%	100%	100%		

**a) Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Level of Election by Region of Interview**

All the three regions in respect of the type of respondent had majority of them saying they will vote for a female candidate at any level of elections, as depicted in the table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Level of Election by Region of Interview in Percentage**

Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Level of Election	Type of Respondent								
	Specialized Knowledge Individual			Opinion Leaders			General Public		
	Northern East	Upper East	Upper West	Northern East	Upper East	Upper West	Northern East	Upper East	Upper West
<b>Yes</b>	92.7	88	90	94.5	100	90	89.9	87.2	89.4
<b>No</b>	7.3	12	5	1.8	0	5	9.4	12.3	10.6
<b>No Response</b>	0	0	5	3.6	0	5	0.7	0.5	0

The table above depicts that over 80 per cent of all the respondents across the regions said they will vote for a female candidate at any level of election. In the Upper East Region, for the opinion leaders, 100 per cent of them answered ‘Yes’ they will vote, and for the General Public in the same region, 87.2 per cent of them said ‘Yes’. Of those who said ‘No’, from the Upper East region, 12.3 per cent of them were respondents from the general public.

**b) Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Level of Election by Sex of Respondents**

With the individuals of the general public, it was interesting to note that of the 713 respondents who said yes they will vote for a female candidate, 327 (45.9 per cent) of them were males whereas 386(54.1 per cent) females, the remaining 83 respondents who said ‘No’ they will not vote, 50(60.2 per cent)

were males and 33 (39.8 per cent) females.

Analyzing that of the opinion leaders, 45 (47.4 per cent) of the 95 respondents who said yes they will vote were males and 50 (52.6 per cent) females. In the case of the ‘No’ respondents, 50 per cent of the males and 50 per cent of the females registering one respondent each said ‘No’.

An insight into the individuals with specialized knowledge shows a different turn of events where 48(52.7 per cent) of the 91 respondents who said ‘Yes’ were males and 43 (47.3 per cent) females. For respondents who said ‘No’ however, 6 (75 per cent) were males and 2 (25 per cent) females.

### c) Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate by Age Groups of Respondents

**Table 4.6: Willingness to Vote for Female Candidate by Age Groups of Respondents in Percentages (%)**

Age Groups of Respondents	Willingness to Vote for a Female Candidate at Any Level of Election					
	Yes			No		
	Specialized Individuals	Opinion Leaders	General Public	Specialized Individuals	Opinion Leaders	General Public
19 and below	100	100	93.3	0	0	6.7
20 – 29	100	100	88	0	0	11.3
30 – 39	87.5	94.7	90	12.5	0	9.5
40 – 49	93.3	92	89.7	6.7	4	10.3
50 – 59	88.4	96.9	87.9	11.6	3.1	11.4
60+	93.6	93.3	89	3.2	0	9.8

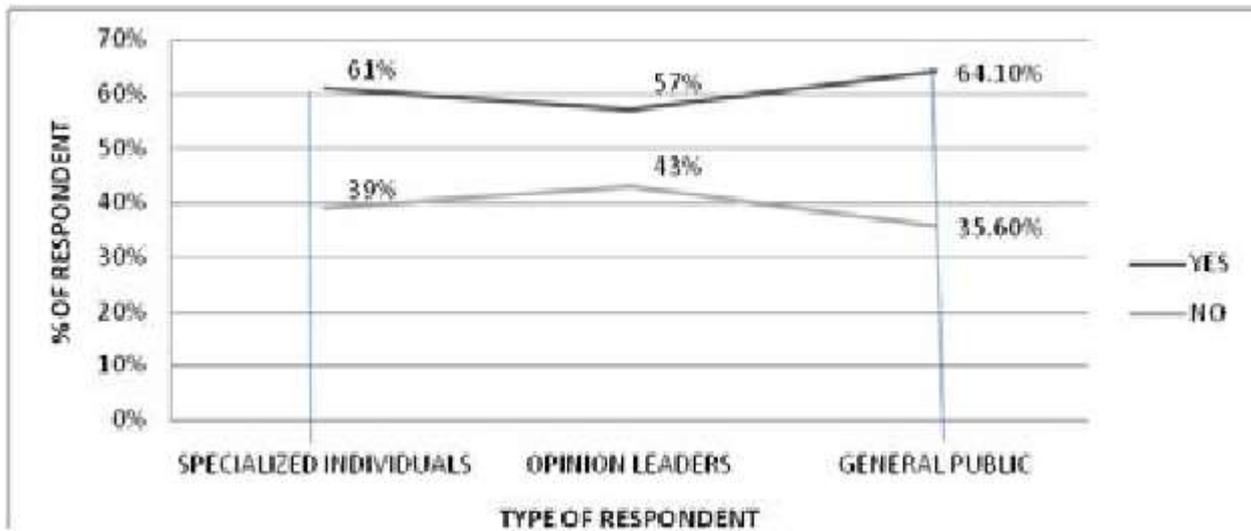
From the table above, all age groups had majority expressing their willingness to vote for a female candidate at any level of election. The age group 19 and below and 20-29 of the individual with specialized knowledge and age group 20-29 of the opinion leaders had 100 per cent of their respondents saying they will vote for a female candidate. Of the general public, the age group 19 and below had the highest proportion within this age group of respondents declaring their willingness. It can be seen that, from the survey, overall the younger generation shows more willingness to vote for a female candidate as compared to the other age groups and this can be seen as a change in the ideology of the younger generation towards gender equality at all levels.

#### 4.4.2 The Role of the State Towards the Participation of Women in Governance

This was a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ question which expected respondents to state in their opinion whether the state was doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance.

For the respondents with specialized knowledge, 61 (61 per cent) of them said ‘Yes’ and 39 (39 per cent) answered ‘No’. For the opinion leaders, 57 (57 per cent) responded ‘Yes’ and 43 (43 per cent) responded ‘No’. For respondents of the general public, 513 (64.1 per cent) said ‘Yes’ and 285(35.6 per cent) said ‘No’.

**Figure 4.3: Whether the State is Doing Enough to Ensure Effective Participation of Women in Governance**



A cross analysis of whether the state is doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance with the region of interview shows that of the 100 individuals with specialized knowledge, 31(56.4 per cent) of respondents from the Northern region said ‘Yes’ and 24 (43.6 per cent) said ‘No’. From the Upper East region, 17(68 per cent) said ‘Yes’ and 8 (32 per cent) said ‘No’. In the Upper West also, 13 (65 per cent) responded ‘Yes’ and 7 (35 per cent) ‘No’.

With the opinion leaders, from the Northern region, 31(56.4 per cent) said ‘Yes’ and 24 (43.6 per cent) said ‘No’. In the Upper East, 18 (72 per cent) of them said ‘Yes’ and 7(28 per cent) ‘No’. From the Upper West however, as much as 60 per cent (12) of the respondents said ‘No’ and 40 per cent (8) said ‘Yes’.

Of the general public, the regional analysis revealed that in the Northern region, 280(62.9 per cent) said ‘Yes’ and 163 (36.6 per cent) ‘No’. For the Upper East, 118 (60.5 per cent) responded ‘Yes’ and 77 (39.5 per cent) ‘No’. In the Upper West, 115 (71.9 per cent), responded ‘Yes’ and 45(28.1 per cent) ‘No’.

The analysis of the sex of respondents in the various categories revealed that 52.8 per cent (28) of the opinion leaders who are female respondents said ‘Yes’, the state is doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance whereas 47.2 per cent (25) said ‘No’. Of the male respondents in this category, 29 (61.7 per cent) said ‘Yes’ and 18 (38.3 per cent) said ‘No’. That of the general public shows that 252 (66.7 per cent) of the male respondents and 261 (61.8 per cent) of the female respondents said ‘Yes’. 126(33.3 per cent) of the male respondents and 159 (37.7 per cent) of the female respondents responded ‘No’. With the individuals who had special knowledge on the research, a similar trend evolved, 33(60 per cent) and 22 (40 per cent) of the male respondents said ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ respectively. Whereas, 28 (62.2 per cent) and 17(37.8 per cent) of the female respondents recorded ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ in that order.

Respondents were asked to give two reasons for their ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ response as to whether in their opinion the state is doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance.

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For the reasons why respondents said ‘Yes’, the state is doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance, a relatively high response was that, women have been appointed to key governmental positions. 36 (36 per cent) of the opinion leaders, 42(42 per cent) of the specialized individuals and 287 (35.9 per cent) of the general public gave this response.

The second reason given was that the government is educating, sensitizing and organizing capacity building workshop to empower women. This is because they believe that women are encouraged to stand for district assembly elections and also more education is done by the state on gender equality. 18(18 per cent), 24(24 per cent) and 174(21.8 per cent) of the opinion leaders, specialized individual and the general public respectively cited this.

Another reason given was that the state is promoting gender equality and the rights of women. This is where the state sees to it that the rights of women are being promoted and not abused. Also gender equality is being targeted by government where equal chance is given to both men and women to compete at all levels. This reason was given by 11 (11 per cent) of the opinion leaders, 14 (14 per cent) of the specialized individual and 162 (20.3 per cent) of the general public.

Promotion of girl child education by the state is yet another reason mentioned by 9 (9 per cent) opinion leaders, 4(4 per cent) specialized individual and 82 (10.3 per cent) general public respondents. Here, the state is encouraging and sensitizing parents to send their girl child to school.

Also some respondents made mention of the fact that women are being appointed to the executive level where ministerial and district chief executive positions are held by women. This position was made by 3(3 per cent) of the opinion leaders, 6 (6 per cent) of the specialized individual and 69 (8.6 per cent) of the general public. In addition, 42 (5.3 per cent) respondents of the general public, 7 (7 per cent) specialized individual and 6 (6 per cent) opinion leaders said there are women in the legislature, where we have female Members of Parliament. For women in the judiciary, 5 (0.6 per cent) of the general public and 3 (3 per cent) of the opinion leaders gave this response, some citing Chief Justice Georgina Theodora Wood.

Lastly, 65 (8.1 per cent) respondents of the general public, 9 (9 per cent) specialized individual and 6(6 per cent) opinion leaders mentioned that financial assistance is being given to women by the state in the form of loan through the forming of associations.

Among the reasons given by respondent as to why they think the state is not doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance is that there are no deliberate policies to encourage women in government. They made mention of the fact that there government has failed to acknowledge women who have the potential to lead. In addition some respondents said there is no motivational package for women with capabilities to lead. Twenty-four (24 per cent) opinion leaders, 127 (15.9 per cent) general public members and 15 (15 per cent) specialized individual asserted to this fact.

More so, respondents believe that there are few women appointed to leadership positions since men are appointed in high positions than women. This point was mentioned by 18(18 per cent) specialized individuals, 108 (13.5 per cent) general public, 22 (22 per cent) opinion leaders.

Also, inadequate financial support for women as mentioned by 18 (18 per cent) specialized individual, 9(9 per cent) opinion leaders and 101(12.6 per cent) members of the general public is another reason

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mentioned. Here respondents said no financial support is given to women to support them in taking up leadership positions.

Five (5 per cent) specialized knowledge individuals, 18 (2.3 per cent) members of the general public and 1 (1 per cent) opinion leader mentioned that the girl child education is not supported by government to the highest level where there are no scholarship package to motivate the female to attain education to the highest level.

Another reason mentioned was that there is no gender balance in appointments as much attention is not paid to women with regards to appointments. 5 (5 per cent) specialized individuals, 60 (7.5 per cent) members of the general public and 10 (10 per cent) opinion leaders mentioned this point.

No woman at highest decision making level of the government and the various political parties. Respondents mentioned that there has never been a woman president in the country. This point was stated by 20 (2.5 per cent) members of the general public, 2 (2 per cent) opinion leaders and 2 (2 per cent) specialized individuals.

The low levels of education among women in the country was stated by 26 (3.3 per cent) members of the general public, 5 (5 per cent) specialized individuals and 4 (4 per cent) opinion leaders. Poverty amongst women in general was another reason given by 10 (1.3 per cent) members of the general public, 1 (1 per cent) opinion leader and 1 (1 per cent) specialized individual.

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# Chapter 5

## Challenges Impeding Women From Taking Up Leadership Roles In Governance

### 5.0 Introduction

Leadership is described as the ability of a person or group of persons to guide or direct a group. Governance relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. According to the Statistical Service provisional figures, Ghana's population as at 2010 stands at 24,223,431 with 12,421,770 (51.3 per cent) females and 11,801,661 (48.7 per cent) males. This implies that the country has a higher female population.

Women are very dynamic, hardworking and have huge potentials and capabilities. Yet when it comes to leadership women are found to lag behind. This chapter examines the issues that prevent women from taking up leadership roles whether it relates to traditional or modern governance system.

### 5.1 Customs and Traditions

A custom can be described as a practice followed by people of a particular group or region. According to (Wikipedia the free Online Encyclopedia) a tradition is a ritual, belief or object passed down within a society, still maintained in the present.

In our Ghanaian society culture plays a very important role. There are traditional kingdoms with chiefs, queen mothers, sub-chiefs etc. Communities have different traditions and customs depending on the particular community. Most of these customs and traditions are productive and portray the way of life of the people. There are some customs and practices however that are outmoded and have negative effects on women. We can draw examples from the Volta region with the practice of Trokosi and the practice of female circumcision from some ethnic groups in the Northern part of Ghana.

In the study respondents were asked the question "in your traditional area do customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs?"

**Figure 5.1: General Public and Opinion leaders: Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs**



**Figure 5.2: Specialized Individuals: Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs**



Figure 5.1 indicates that of 900 respondents interviewed for the general public and opinion leaders majority of the respondents 614 (68.2 per cent) gave a ‘No’ response to women being chiefs in their area. Two hundred and eighty five (31.7 per cent) of respondents said ‘Yes’ that indeed their customs and traditions permitted women to be chiefs. One person gave no response to this question.

The study sample also included one hundred people who have specialized knowledge about the traditions of the people in those regions. The same question about women being chiefs was put to them. Most respondents 58 (58 per cent) said ‘No’ meaning their customs and traditions did not permit women to be chiefs. Forty eight (48 per cent) said “Yes’ that women can be made chiefs.

The results suggest that the traditions and customs of most areas within the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions do not permit women to be chiefs.

### 5.1.1 Cross Tabulation on Whether Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs and Region of Interview

**Table 5.1: Cross Tabulation on Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs and Region of Interview-Opinion Leaders and General Public**

		Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?				Total
		Yes	No	No Re-		
						sponse
Region of Interview	Northern	Count	271	228	1	500
		% within Region of Interview	54.2%	45.6 %	0.2 %	100.0 %
		% within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?	95.1 %	37.1 %	100.0%	55.6 %
	Upper East	Count	4	216	0	220
		% Within Region of Interview	1.8 %	98.2 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
		% Within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?	1.4 %	35.2 %	0.0 %	24.4 %
	Upper West	Count	10	170	0	180
		% Within Region of Interview	5.6 %	94.4 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
		% Within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit women to be chiefs?	3.5 %	27.7 %	0.0 %	20.0 %

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Total	Count % Within	285	614	1	900
	Region of Inter- view	31.7 %	68.2%	0.1 %	100%
	% Within				
	Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Per- mit women to be chiefs?				
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %	100%

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The responses from within the regions in the cross tabulation of the general public and opinion leaders indicate that of the 285 people who said that in their traditional area customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs, 271 (53.7 per cent) were from the Northern region; 4 (1.9 per cent) from the Upper East region and 10 (5.6 per cent) from the Upper West region.

There were 614 respondents who said in their traditional area customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs. Of this number 233 (46.1 per cent) were from the Northern region, 211 (98.1 per cent) from the Upper East region and 170 (94.4 per cent) from the Upper West region. One respondent (2 per cent) from the Northern region did not give a response.

The responses indicate that in the northern region with (46.1 per cent) their customs and traditions are bit more permissive of women becoming chiefs. The Upper East region with 98.1 per cent is a region which according to the responses customs and traditions does not permit women to be chiefs. The responses from the Upper West region with (94.4 per cent) shows they also do not permit women to be chiefs.

**Table 5.2: Specialized Individuals: Cross Tabulation on Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs and Region of Interview**

Region of Interview	Northern	Count	Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?		Total (%)
			Yes (%)	No (%)	
			37	18	55
		% within Region of interview	67.3	32.7	100.0
		%t within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?	88.1	31.0	55.0
	Upper East	Count	2	23	25
		% Within Region of Interview	8.0	92.0	100.0
		% Within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?	4.8	39.7 %	25.0 %
	Upper West	Count	3	17	20
		% Within Region of Interview	15.0	85.0	100.0
		% Within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit Women to be Chiefs?	7.1	29.3	20.0
	Total	Count % Within	42	58	100
		Region of Interview	42.0	58.0	100.0
		% Within Whether in Your Traditional Area, Customs and Traditions Permit women to be chiefs?			
			100.0	100.0	100.0

The one hundred respondents with specialized knowledge were asked the same question whether customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs. There were (42 per cent) of respondents who agreed that within their traditional area customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs. The responses within region of interview indicates that the Northern region had 37 (67.2 per cent), the Upper East 2 (8 per cent) and the Upper West 3 (15 per cent).

There were (58 per cent) of respondents who said in their traditional area customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs. The responses within the regions show that the Northern region had 18 (32.7 per cent), Upper East 23 (92.1 per cent) and Upper West region 17 (85 per cent).

The results once again portrayed the Northern region as having customs and traditions that are more permissive to women becoming chiefs. The Upper East region was the least permissive in terms of customs and culture that allow women to become chiefs.

### 5.1.2 Ways Cultural Beliefs Minimize Women’s Participation in Governance

Cultural beliefs are the commonly held norms and moral standard of a culture, the standard of right and wrong that set expectations for behavior. The beliefs are usually rooted in the cultures symbolic inheritance and include the roles that are appropriate for particular persons (J.J Arnett)

A question was asked about the specific way cultural beliefs minimize women’s participation in traditional governance?

**Table 5.3: General Public and Opinion Leaders: Specific Cultural Beliefs That Minimize Women’s Participation in Traditional Governance**

<b>General Public and Opinion Leaders: Specific Cultural Beliefs that Minimize Women’s Participation in Traditional Governance</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent (%)</b>
Women Should Listen More Than Take Active Part in Decision Making	100	11.1
Women are Incapable, Not Strong Enough and Ritually Unclean to Lead	188	20.9
Superstitious Beliefs on the Part of the Community	245	27.2
Ignorance / High Illiteracy Level on the Part of Women	10	1.1
Women are Not Custodians of Land	24	2.7
Men are Meant to Lead Women	118	13.1
Women Should be More of Home Makers	82	9.1
Only Older Women Should be Made to Play Specific Roles	19	2.1
Any Other	80	8.9
Don’t Know	19	2.1
No Response	15	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The results from the general public and opinion leaders shows that out of the 900 respondents interviewed 245(27.2 per cent) mentioned superstitious beliefs on the part of the community as a hindrance to women’s participation in governance.

One hundred and eighty eight (20.8 per cent) of respondents felt women are incapable, not strong enough and are ritually unclean and therefore cannot lead. One hundred and eighteen (20.9 per cent) held the belief that men were meant to lead. One hundred (11.1 per cent) of respondents were of the opinion that women should listen more than take active part in decision making. Eighty two (9.1 per cent) said women should be more of homemakers. Twenty four (2.7 per cent) said women’s participation was affected by them not being the custodians of the land. Nineteen (2.1 per cent) of respondents said only older women should play specific roles. Ten (1.1 per cent) talked about the problem of ignorance and high illiteracy rate on the part of women.

Eighty (8.9 per cent) of respondents gave other responses than those listed above. Nineteen (2.1 per cent) said don’t know and fifteen (1.7 per cent) gave no response.

**Table 5.4: Specialized Individuals: Specific Cultural Beliefs That Minimize Women’s Participation in Traditional Governance**

Specific Cultural Beliefs That Minimize Women’s Participation in Traditional Governance	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Women Should Listen More than Take Active Part in Decision Making	16	16.0
Women are Incapable, Not Strong Enough and Ritually Unclean to Lead	26	26.0
Superstitious Beliefs on the Part of the Community	20	20.0
Ignorance / High Illiteracy Level on the Part of Women	3	3.0
Women are Not Custodians of Land	1	1.0
Men are Meant to Lead Women	8	8.0
Women Should be More of Home Makers	7	7.0
Only Older Women Should be Made to Play Specific Roles	6	6.0
Any Other	10	10.0
Don’t Know	2	2.0
No Response	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The pattern of responses for those with specialized knowledge was quite similar to that of the general public and opinion leaders. Of the one hundred respondents interviewed twenty six (26 per cent) said Women are incapable, not strong enough and ritually unclean to lead and this notion affects their participation in governance.

Twenty (20 per cent) mentioned superstitious beliefs on the part of the community. Sixteen (16 per cent) of respondents felt women should listen more than take active part in decision making. Eight (8 per cent) insist that men are meant to lead women; another eight (8 per cent) held the view that only older women should be made to play specific roles in traditional governance. Seven (7 per cent) of the respondents said women should be more of home keepers. Three (3 per cent) also mentioned ignorance and the high illiteracy level on the part of women and one(1 per cent) that women are not custodians of the land.

Ten (10 per cent) of respondents gave other responses than those listed above; two (2 per cent) said don’t know and one person (1 per cent) gave no response.

The key responses received give an indication that there are negative cultural attitudes and social beliefs about women. Culturally a woman who is strong and shows huge leadership potential may be called a witch, disrespectful and many other names. In some cases if women played certain traditional roles of offering sacrifice it is believed that the gods would kill them for disobeying certain taboos because they are considered ritually unclean because of their monthly cycle.

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The myths that women are not capable of being good leaders and that women should not take active part in decision making, that it is only right for men to lead women, women should only limit their roles to home keeping and only elderly women should perform certain tasks feature prominently in the responses given.

This actually reflects the tremendous public education and awareness creation that needs to be undertaken to correct erroneous impressions about women which are seriously affecting their participation in governance.

### **5.1.3 A Cross Tabulation of the Specific Cultural Beliefs that Minimize Women's Participation in Traditional Governance and Their Religious Affiliation (General Public and Opinion Leaders)**

A few of the key findings from a cross tabulation of specific cultural beliefs that minimize women's participation in traditional governance and their religious affiliation indicates the following for the general public and opinion leaders.

- Superstitious beliefs on the part of the community were one of the problems mentioned. Within the religious affiliation of the respondent that gave this answer 112 (31.5 per cent) were Christians, 109(24.9 per cent) were Moslems and 24(22.9 per cent) Traditionalists. This proved that superstitious beliefs were held by all the religious groupings whether Christian, Moslem or Traditionalist.
- A woman being incapable and not strong enough and ritually unclean to lead was also mentioned by respondents. Findings from within their religious affiliation indicate that 81(22.8 per cent) of those who gave this response were Christians, 87(19.9 per cent) were Moslems and 20(19 per cent) were Traditionalists. More respondents who are Christians have the belief that women are not capable and ritually clean enough to lead.
- The response that men are meant to lead women was given by 76(17.4 per cent) of respondents who are Moslems, 31(8.7 per cent) Christians and 10(9.5 per cent) who are traditionalists. This issue had a high Moslem response and it may be attributed to their belief system related to their religion.
- Women should be more of homemakers was a response given by some interviewees. The results taking into consideration the religious affiliation of respondents were as follows. The results indicate that those who gave this response 31 (8.7 per cent) were Christians, 37(8.5 per cent) Moslems and 13(12.4 per cent) Traditionalists. Despite their different religious backgrounds they held on to the old fashioned notion that women's place is only to manage the home. Though their actual number was low the percentage of traditionalists was higher than those with other religious background.
- The issue that women should listen more than take active part in decision making was another response given. Within the religious affiliation of respondents, those who gave this response 37 (10.4 per cent) were Christians, 52(11.9 per cent) Moslems and 11(10.5 per cent) Traditionalists. Respondents from the different religious backgrounds seemed to hold this erroneous notion that women should listen more than take active part in decision making. Respondents with Moslem background gave this response more than those with the other religious background.

## **5.2 Factors That Impede Women's Participation in Traditional Governance**

The study sought to determine what issues were preventing women from participating in traditional governance. The respondents were to mention the two most important factors preventing women from

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taking up leadership positions in traditional governance.

The important issues that were raised by the 900 respondents who consist of the general public and opinion members are as follows:

- Tradition and customs do not permit women to be leaders.
- Women have a problem with low self esteem.
- Men are not supporting their women to take up leadership positions.
- Women are perceived as homemakers and not leaders.
- High illiteracy rate among the general population.
- Lack of education among women.
- Gender discrimination.

The same question was put to the one hundred people with specialized knowledge concerning factors that impede women's participation in traditional governance. The responses given followed a similar pattern as that of the general public and opinion leaders' response. An addition given was that:

- Patrilineal system of inheritance prevents women from taking leadership positions.

The findings indicate that there are various factors that impede women from participating in traditional governance. The most significant seems to be the traditions and customs of the area that do not encourage women to play leadership roles. Closely linked with this is the issue of women seen as homemakers and not leaders. Men not supporting their women to take up leadership positions because they say women who are leaders may become arrogant or disrespectful. The patrilineal system of inheritance also prevents women from taking up leadership positions.

In our Ghanaian society our cultures and traditions play an integral role in our way of life. If people are socialized to believe that women are not meant to be leaders but are homemakers then obviously a problem has been created. It makes it difficult for men to encourage their wives to take up leadership positions. Women are not expected to get too involved in traditional governance because of their cultural beliefs about the roles and place of the woman. Women have some leadership roles but they seem limited. There is the need to reform certain cultural practices that inhibit the progress of women and there is the need to conscientize the public on the importance of women participating in traditional governance.

The lack of education or literacy is another important factor that impedes women from participating in traditional governance. Currently we are aware that education helps to break down many barriers such as religion, culture etc. The more women are educated the more likely they are to rise above impediments and participate in traditional governance. In the past most women received little or no education which disadvantaged them in many respects in terms of leadership. To solve this problem the government would need to encourage young girls in the three regions to go to school and attain higher heights in education.

The issue of women having low self esteem may be a result of the way their cultural systems project women as having the primary role of home maker and child producer. Coupled with some women having low educational level it could definitely affect their moral and confidence level. Capacity building programs need to be organized for the women to teach them how to build up their self confidence and participate more in traditional governance.

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### **5.2.1 Cross Tabulation of Two Important Factors Preventing Women From Taking Up Leadership Positions in Traditional Governance and Educational Background**

One of the important factors mentioned was that traditions and customs do not permit women to be leaders. The findings indicate that of those who gave this response 109 (12.1 per cent) of them had no formal education, 22 (2.4 per cent) had no formal education but can speak or write English or vernacular. There were 63 (7 per cent) who had basic education, 86 (9.6 per cent) had secondary level education and 52 (5.8 per cent) tertiary education. Quite a number of respondents (12.1 per cent) who said that traditions and customs do not permit women to be leaders had no formal education. A closer look at the results implies that even (9.6 per cent) of those with secondary education, (7 per cent) who had basic education and (5.8 per cent) with tertiary education felt the same.

Another important factor raised was the fact that women did not receive support from men including their own husbands.

The results show that of the respondents that gave this response 38(4.2 per cent) had no formal education, 3 (0.3 per cent) had no formal education but can speak or write English or vernacular. There were 23 (2.6 per cent) who had basic education, 27 (3 per cent) who had secondary level education and 10 (1.1 per cent) who have tertiary level education. More respondents (4.2 per cent) who had no formal education gave this response, those with secondary (3 per cent) and (2.6 per cent) of respondents with basic education. Very few respondents with tertiary level education (1.1 per cent) gave this response.

The next important factor mentioned was that of women having low self esteem or the fact that they lack self confidence. Of those who gave this response 31(3.4 per cent) had no formal education, 12 (1.3 per cent) had no formal education but can speak or write English or vernacular. There were 26 (2.9 per cent) who had basic education, 49 (5.4 per cent) who had secondary level and 30 (3.3 per cent) who had tertiary level education. These results clearly indicate that the respondents with secondary education (5.4 per cent) gave this response the most, those with no formal education (3.4 per cent) followed and those with tertiary education (3.3 per cent). It seems that individuals with different educational backgrounds all felt women had a problem with low self esteem. This may indicate that probably this problem really exists and needs to be tackled urgently.

The last important factor chosen for discussion is that women are perceived as homemakers and cannot take up leadership positions.

The findings show that for those who gave this response 26 (2.9 per cent) had no formal education, 7 (0.8 per cent) had no formal education but can speak or write English or vernacular. Another 16 (1.8 per cent) had basic education, 19 (2.1 per cent) had secondary education and 13 (1.4 per cent) tertiary level education. The responses indicate that this is a general perception of the respondents irrespective of their educational background.

### **5.3 Factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance**

The study asked the respondents to mention the two most important factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance.

**Table 5.6: General Public and Opinion Leaders: Two Important Factors Preventing Women from Taking Up Leadership Positions in Modern Governance**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent (%)</b>
Lack of Education/Ignorance on the Part of the Women	505	28.1
Financial Constraints on the Part of Women	284	15.8
Lack of Self Confidence	428	23.8
Cultural and Religious Beliefs Inhibiting Women	143	7.9
Lack of Support from Husbands and Men	234	13.0
Lack of Effective Programmes to Promote Women Attainment of Leadership Positions	49	2.7
Due to Wrong Socialization, Some Women Will Not Vote for a Woman Candidate	49	2.7
Any Other	76	4.2
Don't Know	2	0.1
No Response	30	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The following issues emerged as the factors preventing the women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance for the general public and opinion leaders as well as those with specialized knowledge.

- Lack of education and ignorance on the part of the women.
- Lack self confidence.
- Financial constraints on the part of women.
- Lack of support from their husbands and men.
- Cultural and religious beliefs inhibiting women.
- Lack of effective programmes to promote women attainment of leadership positions.
- Due to wrong socialization some women will not vote for a female candidate.

The responses were given by nine hundred respondents who comprised of the general public and opinion leaders. Respondents were asked to give two important factors preventing women from taking leadership positions in modern governance.

Lack of self confidence is another important reason which prevents women from taking positions of leadership in governance. This was mentioned by 200 (22.2 per cent) of respondents as their first important factor and 228 (25.3 per cent) indicated it as their second important factor.

Women often face a lot of financial constraints and this affects their chances of taking up certain leadership positions in modern governance. Of those who responded, 127 (14.1 per cent) mentioned this as their first important reason, and 157 (17.4 per cent) as their second important factor preventing women from taking up leadership in governance.

The problem of women not getting support from men especially their husbands is mentioned. The respondents indicate that also affects the women's ability to take up leadership positions. In all 100 (11.1 per cent) gave this as their first important factor and 134 (14.9 per cent) as their second factor.

Cultural and religious beliefs inhibiting women was also indicated by 54(6 per cent) as their first important factor and 89 (9.9 per cent) as a second factor.

Lack of effective programmes to promote women’s attainment of leadership positions is also mentioned by 28 (3.1 per cent) as first important factor and 21 (2.3 per cent) as second factor.

The problem of women receiving wrong socialization as a result of which some women will not vote a female candidate was spoken about by 18 (1.8 per cent) of respondents as their first important factor and 33(3.7 per cent) as their second.

The question “mention two most important factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance” was also put to one hundred respondents’ with specialized knowledge.

**Table 5.7: Specialized Individuals: Important Factors Preventing Women From Taking Up Leadership Positions in Modern Governance**

	Frequency Per cent	
Lack of Education/Ignorance on the Part of the Women	52	26.0
Financial Constraints on the Part of Women	32	16.0
Lack of Self Confidence	53	26.5
Cultural and Religious Beliefs Inhibiting Women	15	7.5
Lack of Support from Husbands and Men	25	12.5
Lack of Effective Programmes to Promote Women Attainment of Leadership Positions	6	3.0
Due to Wrong Socialization, Some Women Will Not Vote for a Woman Candidate	5	2.5
Any Other	5	2.5
No Response	7	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The issue of women lacking education and being ignorant was indicated by 31(31 per cent) of respondents as their first important factor and by 21 (21 per cent) as second important factor preventing women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance.

Respondents considered women’s lack of self confidence as another important factor preventing them from taking up leadership positions. There were 24 (24 per cent) of respondents who gave this as their first important factor whilst 29 (29 per cent) as their second important factor.

The problem of financial constraints faced by women was mentioned by the specialized respondents as a factor preventing them from taking up leadership positions in governance. As many as 13(13 per cent) respondents indicated this as their first important factor and 19 (19 per cent) as the second important factor affecting women.

The issue of women lacking support from men including their husbands was mentioned as the first important factor preventing women from taking leadership in governance by 16 (16 per cent) respondents with specialized knowledge; and a second important factor by 9 (9 per cent) of respondents.

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The role of cultural and religious beliefs inhibiting women was also mentioned as the first important factor by 7(7 per cent) of the specialized respondents and a second important factor by 8(8 per cent) of respondents.

The lack of effective programmes to promote women attainment of leadership positions is another important factor that prevents women from taking leadership positions in modern governance. For the respondents with specialized knowledge 4(4 per cent) chose this as their first important factor whilst 2(2 per cent) as second important factor.

Due to wrong socialization some women do not vote for female candidates was mentioned by 2(2 per cent) of respondents as their first important factor and 3(3 per cent) as their second important factor.

On the whole the finding so far does indicate that there are many issues affecting the participation of women in governance whether it is traditional or modern. There is need for these issues to be looked at critically and tackled effectively to ensure that women play a stronger role in governance as a whole.

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## **Chapter 6**

### **Enhancing Women Participation In Governance**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

The essential role of women in all facets of the nation's socio-economic development cannot be underestimated. Indeed, Article 17 of the Constitution of Ghana, 1992 provides that a person shall not be discriminated against on the basis of gender or socio economic status. It is therefore pertinent to ensure that women who constitute 51.3 per cent (2010 provisional result of the Ghana statistical service) of the nation's population are duly represented.

#### **6.1 Strengthening Women Participation in Traditional Governance**

The role of women in Ghana cuts across all aspects of human endeavours. The Traditional institution clearly is no exception as women play several roles in the institution with women in certain instances even serving as the chiefs. Hardly a dispute for instance, is settled without the involvement of a woman. Suggestions made to ensure the effective participation of women in Traditional governance included:

- That women should be more participatory in issues relating to traditional governance as they learn on the job so as to enhance their leadership wellbeing.
- That women should be given formal education as well as capacity building in leadership skills.
- That people should change their negative perception about women.
- That women leaders themselves must distinguish themselves in roles assigned to them.
- That outmoded cultural practices that inhibit the involvement of women in effective participation should be changed.

#### **6.2 Strengthening Women Participation in Modern Governance**

The effective participation of women in the nation's current democratic dispensation cannot be overemphasized. There is therefore the need to ensure that they are well equipped to make significant impact. The opinions of the respondents were sought as to what could be done to ensure that women are strengthened to significantly contribute their quota to the socio-economic development of the nation. Among the means mentioned by the respondents in the category of persons named as the general public include:

- Holding of capacity building programmes for women.
- Non Governmental Organisations and other groups should give more financial assistance to women.
- Intensive Public Education to sensitize the public especially the men on the need to avoid all forms of gender based discrimination.
- Reserving some key positions in government for women.
- Doing away with all cultural believes that inhibit the effective involvement of women.
- Women availing and involving themselves in all social and political activities.
- The need for an affirmative action by government.

Among the suggestions given by the Specialized group included that;

- Educational and capacity building programmes should be organized for women.
- Women should be assisted financially by the government and Non Governmental Organisations.
- Men are sensitized through public education to encourage women and eliminate inhibitive

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cultural beliefs.

- Some key positions in government are reserve for women.
- Affirmative action should be enforced by government and other organizations.
- Women should involve themselves in partisan politics.

### **6.3 Ways Political Parties Can Promote the Participation of Women in Governance**

Political parties are free per article 55(3) of Ghana's 1992 Constitution to participate in shaping the political will of the people, to disseminate information on political ideas, social and economic programmes of a national character and sponsor candidates for elections to any public office other than to District Assemblies or lower local government units. It is in line with this constitutional provision on the role of political parties that respondents indicated contributions these parties can make towards the promotion of women in governance. Among the general public, their suggestions included;

- Political Parties providing financial and logistical support to women aspirants.
- Educational programmes to enhance the capacity of women.
- Women being allowed to express their opinions freely on political platforms.
- Quota for woman who aspire to leadership positions.
- Appointing more women to take up leadership positions.
- Encouraging women to be much more involved in decision making within their respective parties.
- Make the cost of filing for positions much more affordable.

Specialized group indicated that:

- Logistical and financial support should be given to women who intend contesting for elective positions.
- Educational programmes should be held to enhance the capacity of the women.
- Women should be much more involved in partisan politics and take front line roles.
- Opinions of women should be respected by all.
- There should be quota for women representatives.

### **6.4 Improving the Participation of Women in District Assembly Elections**

The involvement of all persons in the local governance of this nation is very crucial as the local government system is deemed to be the closest to the people. Indeed, the active involvement of all women is expected to bring out the best from the assembly to satisfy the needs of the people.

In the opinion of the specialized group, women do not generally participate actively in the District Assembly Elections as 30 and 54 of them noted either the involvement of women in the District Assembly elections was Very Low or Low respectively. Only 14 of them indicated that it was high with 2 stating that the involvement was Very High.

The Assessment of the General public also followed that of the specialized group as 756 representing 84 per cent rated the involvement of women in the district assembly elections to be either Low or Very Low. A hundred and twenty two rated the involvement of women to be High with 28 representing 3.1 per cent rating it to be Very High.

It is evidently clear that in the opinion of a whooping majority of the respondents, women do not participate effectively in the District Assembly Elections, and therefore suggested ways by which the participation of women can be improved. The suggestions made included;

- 
- Women should be assisted financially by the state.
  - Qualified women should be encouraged to contest.
  - Effective capacity building programmes should be held for women who intend to contest for elections.
  - Certain percentage or a Quota of positions should be reserved for women.
  - Men should be sensitized to encourage and support women to contest.

## **6.5 Improving the Participation of Women in Parliamentary Elections**

The legislative power of Ghana has been vested in the Parliament of Ghana in accordance with the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Parliament therefore as expected is supposed to be much more representative of the people. It is in this regard that women who represent the majority of the nation's population should have a fair share of representation in the house.

### **6.5.1 Rating Participation of Women in Parliamentary Elections**

Respondents were asked as to how effective in their opinion is the participation of women in the Parliamentary elections. In this line, majority (almost all) of the respondents rated the representation of women to be abysmal and several reasons were adduced to buttress their opinion. The reasons they stated included:

- Women should be assisted financially to assist them in their bid to be parliamentarians.
- Educative programmes should be organized to build their capacity.
- Men should be much more supportive of women ambitions.
- Women should be given a certain quota of the candidacy.
- Train women to communicate effectively and present a good campaign.
- Women as a start up should be given positions in the political parties.
- Train women to communicate effectively and present a good campaign.

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# Chapter 7

## Field Experiences of Research Assistants

### 7.0 Introduction

Some Research Assistants (RAs) were selected and trained by resource persons from the National Headquarters of the Research Department of NCCE. The main purpose and relevance of this training was to equip the RAs with the requisite skills for collecting adequate information for an effective exercise. Subsequently, Research Assistants (RAs) submitted a report at the end of the project.

The reports contained the procedure employed in conducting the research exercise, and challenges faced in implementation of the procedure, response to questionnaires, notable issues and recommendations for subsequent exercises.

### 7.1 Procedure Adopted in Selecting the Respondents

Designed questionnaires for the general public and people with specialized knowledge were administered and methods adapted in the survey were purposive and random sampling using face to face interview method. The Simple Sampling Technique (SST) was used for the administration of the questionnaires to the populace once the day's code had been established. A sampling gap of three (3) in the rural area and five (5) in urban areas was employed. In cases where members of a household to be interviewed were absent, the RAs moved on to the next house, this is to ensure that, each unit in the selection stood an equal chance of being included or excluded in the final sample.

Purposive or judgemental sampling technique was used for the opinion leaders and specialised persons because they typify most of the characteristics of interest to the study. The questionnaire was administered by the RAs for the respondents with in-depth knowledge on customs and traditions, traditional leaders and opinion leaders thus enriching the information on the case under study.

### 7.2 Constraints Faced in Adopting Procedure Selected

On the whole, the exercise was successful but laced with some bottlenecks. The sampling gap initially adopted was discontinued because it sometimes fell on a church building or an empty household. It was also difficult to administer since the houses in the communities were not properly situated.

Some respondents did not avail themselves for the interview for the fear of their husbands not being in favour of them interacting with strangers more so a male, which was a challenge to most of the interviewer. The questionnaire administration was wrongly timed since it was the harvesting period for the northern regions, so most community members were mostly on the farms during the day, hence making it quite hectic for data collection.

Most of the educated respondents precisely the opinion leaders, wanted to fill the questionnaires themselves due to their ability to read and write, making them understand this was not right took quite a while . This increased the time spent per correspondent thus making it difficult to achieve the said target of eight (8) questionnaires in a day.

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Most respondent were not ready to speak on the issue, in spite of several attempts by RAs to make them know it was a national exercise. Some still believed it could be politically affiliated and they would not want to speak to any issues or show any commitment to issues concerning that. Thus putting constraints on the procedure adopted.

RAs also had difficulties interviewing women, specifically in the rural areas. This is because it is believed that women have no business in speaking on issues when heads of families such as their husbands were there to do it on their behalf.

### **7.3 Response to the Questionnaire**

The response to the questionnaire was encouraging, especially the opinion leaders were enthusiastic to provide information, and as most of the respondents cooperated with the RAs once the purpose of the exercise had been established. In all the research was a success since the stated objectives were achieved. However some of the respondents were reluctant in giving out information for fear of exposure and victimization. Others were also very evasive because they were of the view that the questionnaire should be administered to only women, and also on the grounds that the RAs have been sent by the government to fish them out, based on that pre-conceived notion, other respondents declined, but were only willing to do so at a cost.

### **7.4 Noteworthy Issues**

NCCE has been commended for its efforts in the education of the citizenry but has been urged to do more, especially in the case of women.

Some people especially some male respondents who are well versed in the Quran were of the notion that women by tradition and culture were not destined to command authority but did not disagree with the fact that women would become leaders of nations as stipulated in the Quran and thus only when the time is due.

Also the issue of discrimination against women is still being practiced in the districts and in some cases has become established as the norm. This is a very worrying development.

One important thing that kept coming is the limitation or barriers imposed by both culture and religion on women in certain areas such as performing sacrifices, and leading societies.

On the part of modern governance education is a major hindrance to women because of low rate of girl child education in some regions, which render most women unqualified to hold key positions.

Worse of it all women who actively participated in political or public affairs are given a second look and regarded as prostitutes, hence most women shy away from participating in governance.

### **7.5 Suggestion**

Now that more people are appreciating the need for women in leadership position, NCCE should collaborate with the media, and through seminars to change the perception of people about women's participation in governance.

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To encourage the general public's participation in exercise of this nature, NCCE must intensify education and collaborate with all stakeholders and opinion leaders to educate the citizenry the objectives of the Constitution and most importantly why it is necessary to educate the girl child.

The public should be educated not to brand the women participating in governance in order not discourage others from coming up.

The RAs should be precise when translating the questionnaire to the respondents so as to minimize the difficulty in translating them into other local languages to preserve the right and true meaning of words used in the questionnaires.

There is also the need for all RAs to be well resourced for serious public and civic education in the districts and also RAs should have identification such as T-shirts or tags to enable them work with ease when it comes to community entry in executing future projects.

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## Chapter 8

### Summary of Findings and Conclusion

This study, *The Role of Women in Traditional Governance: Case Study of the Three Northern Regions* was necessitated by the perceived non-recognition of the traditional roles of women from that part of the country resulting in few women occupying key leadership positions in traditional governance ultimately translating into very low representation of women in Parliament, District Assemblies as well as participating in key leadership positions in other political and public spheres of endeavour. The findings are intended to guide the NCCE, NGOs working in the interest of women and other allied institutions in their educational campaigns towards increasing and enhancing the participation of women in election 2012 and beyond.

The findings showed clearly that the respondents in the three Northern regions are aware of the roles women played and continue to play in traditional as well as modern governance. The respondents demonstrated a high level of knowledge about leadership roles that women played and continue to play in traditional governance by identifying such roles as a woman chief, *Tindana* (Earth Priestess) Queen mother and *magajia* (Leader of Women).

It was also evident that the respondents were aware of the other leadership roles that women played and continue to play in traditional governance towards moving their respective communities forward. However, for a large majority of respondents customs and traditions do not permit women to be chiefs except for a few places in the Northern and Upper East regions. For the position of a Female Tindana, the findings showed that for majority of respondents, customs and traditions do not allow a woman to be a Tindana except for a few areas in the Northern and Upper East regions. It also came out clearly that the position of the Queen mother is a new concept being adopted in the northern sector even though a few Queen mothers existed there especially in the Northern region. The position of Magajia is one that cuts across all three northern regions with a majority of respondents indicating that the position has always been part of their traditional system.

The findings showed that the participation of women in traditional governance is low (60 per cent). Twenty percent (20 per cent) indicated high with less than ten percent rating the participation of women as very high. Prominent among the reasons for rating the participation of women in traditional governance as low is the fact that customs and traditions do not permit women to be leaders.

The findings again showed that for a majority of respondents, the participation of women in district assembly elections is low. Again for a majority of respondents the participation of women in the parliamentary election is very low. For an overwhelming majority of respondents, (over 90 per cent) they will be willing to vote for a female at any level of election. We are yet to observe whether this view will translate into high election victory for women in 2012 general elections.

On the role of the state towards the participation of women in modern governance, the findings showed that a majority of respondents, (63.1 per cent) said government was doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance. However, for 36.7 per cent of respondents, the state was not doing enough to ensure the participation of women in governance.

Prominent among the reasons why the state was believed to be doing enough to ensure effective

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participation of women in governance were; women have been appointed to key governmental positions, government was educating, sensitizing and organizing capacity building workshops to empower women as well as promoting gender equality and the right of women.

On the other hand, among the reasons why the state was perceived as not doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance was the lack of deliberate policies to encourage effective participation of women in governance; appointment of few women to key leadership positions and inadequate financial support for women who put up themselves for elections and structural constraints hindering women's attainment to highest decision-making positions in most political parties.

The findings revealed the challenges which constrained women from taking up leadership roles in governance. The major challenges identified for traditional governance were; customs and traditions; cultural beliefs; low self-confidence on the part of women and lack of support from men. The challenges identified for modern governance were; lack of education and ignorance on the part of women; lack of self-confidence; financial constraints; lack of support from husbands, men, cultural and religious beliefs. The survey offered some suggestions towards enhancing women's participation in governance. Prominent among the suggestions identified towards strengthening women's participation in traditional governance were that cultural practices inhabiting effective participation of women should be changed; people should change their negative perception about women; formal education should be given to women as well as capacity building in leadership skills.

The report also captured the suggestions towards strengthening effective participation of women in modern governance. Key among the suggestions were: there is the need for affirmative action by government; carry out intensive public education especially for men on the need to avoid all forms of gender based discrimination. Hold capacity building programmes for women; Reserve key positions in government for women; Doing away with all forms of cultural and religious beliefs that inhibit women. NGOs and other groups should support women financially, and finally women should avail and involve themselves in all social and political activities.

The survey also looked at ways political parties could promote the participation of women in governance. Here political parties were called upon to provide financial and Logistical support for women aspirant and carry out educational programmes to enhance the capacity of women; Quota should be reserved for women who aspire to leadership positions, and more women should be appointed to leadership positions. The cost of filing by women to contest elections should be made affordable.

On improving the participation of women in District Assembly and Parliamentary elections, respondents put forward these suggestions; Women should be assisted financially; qualified women should be encouraged to contest; effective capacity building programmes should be held for women aspirants; certain quota of positions should be reserved for women and men should be sensitized to encourage and support women to contest.

## **Conclusion**

Ghana's democratic experience has been reckoned as the beacon of hope on the African Continent as it has survived four successive general elections with a peaceful transition from one elected government to another. However, Ghana is said to be among the few countries with low representation of women in Parliament and other key leadership positions in the political and public spheres of endeavour.

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From the findings, it is clear that there is the need for intensified public education for the general public especially men to change their perception about women. There is also the need for capacity building programmes to enhance the leadership skills of women as well as boost their self-confidence. Also demanding serious attention is financial and logistical support for women who put up themselves for election at all levels as well as the adoption of the quota system by state governments and political parties towards the advancement of women in political and public spheres of life.

Finally, we call for a strong commitment on the part of government, NGOs and the NCCE to provide the needed support for increased representation of women in key positions in politics and public endeavours in Ghana in general and the Three Northern regions in particular.

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# Appendix A

## QUESTIONNAIRE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE (GENERAL)

**TITLE: ROLE OF WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE: CASE STUDY OF THE  
THREE NORTHERN REGIONS**

(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST  
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)

NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....

PLACE OF INTERVIEW .....

TRADITIONAL AREA.....

CONSTITUENCY.....

REGION.....

DATE OF INTERVIEW.....

**TYPE OF RESPONDENT:**

**GENERAL PUBLIC**

**OPINION LEADERS**



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**SECTION B**

**LEADERSHIP ROLES PLAYED BY WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM**

7. In your traditional area, do customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

8. Has there ever been a woman chief in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

9. In your opinion, what qualities should a woman possess to be a chief?

She should be:

- i. Brave.....
- ii. Wealthy.....
- iii. Of Royal lineage....
- iv. Respectful.....
- v. Impartial.....
- vi. Physically Beautiful...
- vii. Any other (specify) .....

10. Has there ever been a female Tindana in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

11. If Yes, what role does she play in the traditional setting?

- i. Arbitration and settlement of disputes.....
- ii. Owner and general administrator of the land.....
- iii. Mediate between her people and the gods.....
- iv. Perform rituals on behalf of the people.....
- v. Any Other (specify) .....

12. If No, why?

.....  
.....

13. In the past, were there any queen mothers in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No .....

14. Give two reasons for your answer.

- i. ....  
.....
- ii. ....  
.....

15. Do you have a magajia in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

- 
16. What roles do they play in your traditional area?
    - i. Mobilize women for developmental activities.....
    - ii. Settlement of disputes.....
    - iii. Form associations to support women financially.....
    - iv. Lead women group in organizing funerals, marriages, festivals and other important occasions.....
    - vi. Any other (specify) .....
    - .....
    - .....
  
  17. Has the concept of magajia always been part of your traditional system?
    - i. Yes.....
    - ii. No.....
  
  18. What other leadership roles do women play in traditional governance in your traditional area?
    - i. ....
    - ii. ....
  
  19. In the past, what economic roles did women play in your traditional area?
    - i. Home maker.....
    - ii. Farming.....
    - iii. Fishing.....
    - iv. Trading.....
    - v. Shea butter extraction.....
    - vi. Weaving.....
    - vii. Any other (specify) .....
  
  20. Currently, what are the economic roles of women in your traditional area?
    - i. Student.....
    - ii. Farming.....
    - iii. Fishing.....
    - iv. Teacher/lecturer.....
    - v. Public servant....
    - vi. Trader/ businesswoman...
    - vii. Home maker.....
    - viii. Artisan (specify) .....
    - ix. Any other (specify).....
  
  21. How will you assess the general participation of women in traditional governance in your traditional area?
    - i. Very high.....
    - ii. High.....
    - iii. Low.....
    - iv. Very Low.....
  
  22. Give two reasons for your answer?
    - i. ....
    - .....
    - ii. ....
    - .....

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**SECTION C**  
**ENHANCING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE**

23. Mention two most important factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in traditional governance?

- i. ....  
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- ii. ....  
.....

24. In what specific way do cultural beliefs minimize women’s participation in traditional governance?

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.....

25. Suggest two ways to strengthen women’s participation in leadership positions in traditional governance?

- i. ....  
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- ii. ....  
.....

26. In what ways can political parties promote the participation of women in leadership positions in modern governance?

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27. Mention two most important factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance?

- i. ....  
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- ii. ....  
.....

28. Suggest two ways to strengthen women’s participation in leadership positions in modern governance?

- i. ....  
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- ii. ....  
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29. Will you vote for a female candidate at any level of election?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

30. How would you assess the general participation of women in the district assembly elections over the years in your traditional area?

- i. Very high.....
- ii. High.....
- iii. Low.....
- iv. Very low.....

31. What can be done to improve the participation of women in the district assembly elections?

.....  
.....

32. How would you assess the general participation of women in parliamentary elections over the years in your traditional area?

- i. Very high.....
- ii. High.....
- iii. Low.....
- iv. Very low.....

33. What can be done to improve the participation of women in parliamentary elections?

.....  
.....

34. In your opinion, is the **State** doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

35. Give two reasons for your answer.

- i. ....  
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- ii. ....  
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**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**(IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH PEOPLE WITH SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE)**

**TITLE: ROLE OF WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE: CASE STUDY OF THE  
THREE NORTHERN REGIONS**

(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST  
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....**

**PLACE OF INTERVIEW .....**

**TRADITIONAL AREA.....**

**CONSTITUENCY.....**

**REGION.....**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW.....**



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**SECTION B**  
**LEADERSHIP ROLES PLAYED BY WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM**

7. In your traditional area, do customs and traditions permit women to be chiefs?

- i. Yes.....                      ii. No.....

8. Has there ever been a woman chief in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....                      ii. No.....

9. In your opinion, what qualities should a woman possess to be a chief?

She should be:

- i. Brave.....  
ii. Wealthy.....  
iii. Of Royal lineage.....  
iv. Respectful.....  
v. Impartial.....  
vi. Physically Beautiful...  
vii. Any other (specify) .....

10. Has there ever been a female Tindana in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....                      ii. No.....

11. If Yes, what role does she play in the traditional setting?

- i. Arbitration and settlement of disputes.....  
ii. Owner and general administrator of the land.....  
iii. Mediates between her people and the gods.....  
iv. Perform rituals on behalf of the people.....  
v. Any other (specify) .....

12. If No, why?

- i. ....  
.....

13. In the past, were there any queen mothers in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....                      ii. No.....

14. Give two reasons for your answer.

- i. ....  
.....  
ii. ....  
.....

15. Do you have a magajia in your traditional area?

- i. Yes.....                      ii. No.....

- 
16. What roles do they play in your traditional area?
    - i. Mobilize women for developmental activities.....
    - ii. Settlement of disputes.....
    - iii. Form associations to support women financially.....
    - iv. Lead women group in organizing funerals, marriages, festivals and other important occasions.....
    - v. Any Other (specify) .....
    - .....
    - .....
  
  17. Has the concept of magajia always been part of your traditional system?
    - i. Yes.....
    - ii. No.....
  
  18. What other leadership roles do women play in traditional governance in your traditional area?
    - i. ....
    - ii. ....
  
  19. In the past, what economic roles did women play in your traditional area?
    - i. Home maker.....
    - ii. Farming.....
    - iii. Fishing.....
    - iv. Trading.....
    - v. Shea butter extraction.....
    - vi. Weaving.....
    - vii. Any other (specify) .....
  
  20. Currently, what are the economic roles of women in your traditional area?
    - i. Student.....
    - ii. Farming.....
    - iii. Fishing.....
    - iv. Teacher/lecturer.....
    - v. Public servant....
    - vi. Trader/ businesswoman...
    - vii. Home maker.....
    - viii. Artisan (Specify) .....
    - ix. Any Other (Specify).....
  
  21. Are there any changes in the traditional roles of women?
    - i. Yes.....
    - ii. No.....
  
  22. If yes, what in your opinion has accounted for such a change?
 

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23. How will you assess the general participation of women in traditional governance in your traditional area?

- i. Very high.....
- ii. High.....
- iii. Low.....
- iv. Very Low.....

24. Give two reasons for your answer?

- i. ....
- ii. ....

**SECTION C**  
**ENHANCING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE**

25. Mention two most important factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in traditional governance?

- i. ....
- ii. ....

26. In what specific way do cultural beliefs minimize women participation in traditional governance?

.....

27. Suggest two ways to strengthen women’s participation in leadership positions in traditional governance?

- i. ....
- ii. ....

28. In what ways can political parties promote the participation of women in leadership positions in modern governance?

.....

29. Mention two most important factors preventing women from taking up leadership positions in modern governance?

- i. ....
- ii. ....

30. Suggest two ways to strengthen women participation in leadership positions in modern governance?

- i. ....
- ii. ....

31. Will you vote for a female candidate at any level of election?

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....

- 
- 
32. How would you assess the general participation of women in the district assembly elections over the years in your traditional area?
- i. Very high.....
  - ii. High.....
  - iii. Low.....
  - iv. Very low.....

33. What can be done to improve the participation of women in the district assembly elections?  
.....  
.....

34. How would you assess the general participation of women in parliamentary elections over the years in your traditional area?
- i. Very high.....
  - ii. High.....
  - iii. Low.....
  - iv. Very low.....

35. What can be done to improve the participation of women in parliamentary elections?  
.....  
.....  
.....

36. In your opinion, is the **State** doing enough to ensure effective participation of women in governance?
- i. Yes.....
  - ii. No.....

37. Give two reasons for your answer.

- i. ....  
.....
- ii. ....  
.....

## Appendix B

### Sampled Constituencies

#### Northern Region

No.	Constituencies	District/Municipality	Traditional Area
	Wulensi	Nanumba South	Nanung
	Bole	Bole	Gonja
	Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo	Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo	Mamprugu
	Yapei-Kusawgu	Central Gonja	Gonja
	Nalerigu	East Mamprusi	Mamprugu
	Gushegu	Gushegu	Dagbon
	Karaga	Karaga	Dagbon
	Saboba	Saboba	Dagbon
	Savelugu	Savelugu-Nanton	Dagbon
	Tamale Central	Tamale	Dagbon
	Yendi	Yendi	Dagbon

#### Upper East Region

No.	Constituencies	District/Municipality	Traditional Area
	Bolgatanga	Bolgatanga	Bolgatanga
	Chiana-Paga	Kassena-Nankana West	Paga
	Builsa South	Builsa	Builsa
	Garu-Tempane	Garu-Tempane	Bawku
	Talensi	Talensi-Nabdum	Nangodi

#### Upper West Region

Constituencies

Jirapa

Lawra-Nandom

Sissala East

Wa Central

District/Municipality

Jirapa

Lawra

Sissala East

Wa

Traditional Area

Jirapa

Nandom

Sissala

Wala

