

# ***WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE IN GHANA***



by Beatrix Allah-Mensah

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# **WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE IN GHANA**

By Beatrix Allah Mensah

**AUTHOR:**

Beatrix Allah-Mensah  
Department of Political Science  
University of Ghana, Legon

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I would like to state that, except for quotations or references which have been dully acknowledged, this is the result of a research I conducted personally.

God Bless all who contributed to this effort.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to all men and women committed to the course of women and to my beloved mother Beatrice Kwofie, for being the woman she is.

# **FOREWORD**

## **WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE**

This is one of five studies commissioned by FES in 2004 to provide well researched information on the activities and representation of Ghanaian women in certain sectors of the society. Within the context of upcoming general elections this study also aimed to make an input into current gender advocacy campaigns in general and the formulation of a Women's Manifesto for Ghana in particular.

**Women in Politics and Public Life** provides facts and figures on the participation of women in state institutions. Also, it examines the policies towards affirmative action of various governments of Ghana.

The conclusions of this publication point to the fact that, women in this area are grossly under represented even if compared to the number of qualified women in the population. Furthermore, a significant number of those who are employed in the civil and public service occupy "low grade level" positions only.

The study therefore makes a strong case for the increase of the number of women in public life in general and in executive positions in particular.

FES is of the firm belief that the active participation of women in the governance process is a necessary prerequisite for the acceleration and consolidation of good governance in Ghana. We see our support of this publication as part of our contribution to strengthen the democratic process and social justice in Ghana.

Finally, we want to place on record our profound gratitude to the author, Beatrix Allah-Mensah for a well researched study and to all those who assisted her in this regard.

**Joerg Bergstermann**  
Resident Director

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of women in politics and public offices is one of the current burning governance issues because of the perceived and acknowledged potential and contribution of women to governance processes. Participating effectively and meaningfully in order to have an impact is a process of empowerment that enhances the self worth of individuals and groups.

This study sought to do a number of things. Among others, it was to look into the current trend of women's participation and positions in politics and public offices, which also entailed detailed position and contribution of women in selected political parties. It also focused on positions of women in some selected Ministries, constitutionally created institutions and other key public organizations. Recommendations made were based on some of the identified challenges hindering or inhibiting women's efforts and interests to play significant roles in the political economy of Ghana.

At the political level, there is no disputing the fact that, the number of women is seeing a steady growth from the local government level in particular especially in the number of contestants and actual elected women. At the national level, particularly in the legislature, the picture has not seen much significant change since 1996. This reflects strongly in the composition of the membership of standing committees and select committees of parliament where real debate on legislative issues takes place. Certainly, this affects the contribution of women to the policy making process.

At the political party level, although all the parties selected for the study, which are the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the People's National Convention (PNC), the Convention People's Party (CPP) except for the Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP), make claims in their manifestoes to their commitment to gender issues in general and women's concerns in particular, it is not very evident even in their party leadership structure and in their own internal organization.

Some party leaders corroborated this by stating that positions are contested for and not given on the basis of one's gender. Furthermore, it was apparent that women in politics encounter similar challenges irrespective of

the party they subscribe to. Here, the common denominator is their gender. Thus, a common thread of subtle discrimination positioned in the context of competitive politics runs through all political parties. This has resulted in very negligible number of women in the main party leadership positions and beyond the usual women wings, which is almost at the outskirts of the party. In other words, there is more rhetoric to the question, issues and concerns of women by political parties, which have a unique opportunity (whether in government or opposition) to change the current situation of women's weak composition and contribution than any realism towards addressing the challenges.

At the public offices level, the political situation resonates quite expressly. In all the public institutions including some selected Ministries, the hierarchical structure was highly gendered. Put differently, there were very few women at the apex of the hierarchy where important decisions take place whilst the bulk of women in these organizations were concentrated at the lowest ranking levels. Among the factors alluded to for the status quo included sheer discrimination on the grounds that women cannot combine high level positions and associated demands with their roles as mothers and wives. Furthermore, some of the positions required a higher degree which most of the women do not have thereby making them automatically unqualified for such positions. Another identified factor was that, due to poor conditions of service, young, promising female graduates leave for better jobs elsewhere particularly in the private sector and the universities.

Furthermore, there was a mix indication of the nature of the relationship between men and women in public institutions. Whilst majority of the respondents (both men and women) noted that generally the level of discrimination on the basis of gender is low, there were indications that in some context there was clear-cut discrimination. For instance, in access to some cushioning facilities for workers in case of financial difficulty. In one organization, it was clearly noted that, it takes a lot more time for women to get loans they apply for than men because the women are considered married who should get the needed financial assistance from their husbands.

The role of civil society organizations was also highlighted because of their invaluable contributions to the advancement of women in both public offices and in politics through a plethora of activities.

One recommendation that kept flowing from respondents was the need for increased opportunities for education for women. This was because education was recognized as a line of attack by which many of the challenges women in particular encounter with respect to their role in politics and public offices and positions could be addressed. This was also to help women in their economic empowerment because weak or lack of finance has partly been blamed for women's disinterestedness in political and other equally important roles in the public sphere.

Part of the conclusion drawn was that, women's representation in especially appointive positions would be dependent on the implementation of the national affirmative action, which many public servants were ignorant of. Whilst some alluded to its application in their institutions on the basis of being an equal opportunities employer, many did not have any affirmative action.

Recommendations made relate to institutional, party, media, educational, attitudinal changes and adherence to implementing existing policies aimed at closing the disturbing gap between men and women in politics and public offices.

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

## **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

There is sufficiently reasonable evidence supporting the assertion that women have potentials, which can be tapped to meaningfully enhance social, economic and political development of nations. This awareness has led to efforts by governments complemented by civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multilateral institutions and individuals at the micro, meso and macro levels to actualize these potentials.

While such efforts by recognized groups and entities have, in some cases, yielded positive results, there is still much to be done to ensure that women in fact, contribute their part to the political, social and economic enhancement of their nations and communities. This is because figures available with regard to the number of women in politics and public offices are still below expectation (See ISSER/DPPC report 1998). The expectation can be achieved through a variety of identified means. Nonetheless, if efforts at addressing the problem of women's meaningful involvement in politics and public life are to be successful, then there is the need for factual information about current trends of participation in terms of numbers and impact. This will help to have a focused and systematic approach towards addressing the problems with a potentially higher degree for a win-win situation due to the factual foundation of efforts.

It is against this setting that this study unfolds to look into the participation and presence of women not only in politics specifically but also in public life in general due to their semeiotic relationship. This will enable key stakeholders like political parties, government and its institutions and agencies and other civil society groups to know the reality on the ground and act appropriately to address the identified problems.

## 1.2 Research Questions

On the basis of the above, the following research questions guided the study:

- What are the historical and current trends with regard to women's participation in politics in Ghana?
- What is the current trend with regard to women's presence in the public sector?
- What has been the contribution of civil society to enhancing women's participation in public and political life in Ghana?
- What are the positions of political parties, government and other state institutions (including the three branches of government) on the role and participation of women in political and public offices?
- What institutional mechanisms exist to address the weak participation of women in politics and public offices?
- What are the strategies of political parties, local government institutions, public boards and companies for affirmative action?
- What identified challenges militate against the effective participation of women in politics and public offices and what measures have been put in place by stakeholders to address them?
- In what ways can women themselves contribute to reducing the challenges that hinder their effective participation in politics and public offices?
- What lessons can be drawn from the research that would help stakeholders in general but especially political parties to address the problems of women's participation in political and public life?
- What recommendations can be made to address the problems of women in politics and public offices?

### **1.3 Aim/Objectives**

The major aim of this research is to bring out the current state of affairs pertaining to women in political and public life, which would be used as a platform for the political campaign of various political parties in the 2004 upcoming crucial elections and subsequent ones. It would then serve as the bases to hold them and the government in power accountable to the course of women in Ghana in general. The study sets out to do the following:

- Examine the trend of women's participation in politics and public offices using existing figures and the implications of that for democracy and good governance.
- It also examines the manifestoes and positions of political parties with regard to women or gender issues and how diligently these are being adhered to especially in an election year.
- The study also addresses institutional advancement and/or inhibition to women's efforts to play key roles in politics and public office.
- In addition, it examines the efforts made by women or women's groups in advancing the course of women in politics and public life, like efforts at the development of the Women's Manifesto.
- It also endeavours to identify and seek solutions to the challenges women encounter in their attempt or quest to get into politics and public offices and
- The study delineates lessons/recommendations for the enhancement of democracy, good governance and gender issues in Ghana.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is very significant and timely. In fact, there have been clamour for information on the position of women in key positions in Ghana in a more compact form. There are a number of publications related to Ghanaian women's role in various sectors of the political economy, which could serve as a basis for discussion and policy focus. Yet, there is always the need to update, challenge and refocus issues to reflect prevailing trends. It is also important that such key political activities like general elections are used as basis for changing certain problematic scenarios like the very weak representation of women in politics and public offices.

This unacceptable situation exudes pressure in two directions. First, it puts significant stress on the few women in such positions to carry a huge burden of making impact with widespread positive implications for the majority and secondly, it takes a long more time for authorities to listen and act effectively.

This study attempts to bring the issues together, draw political parties' attention, inform the general public including CSOs, educational institutions and development partners to whip up their activities aimed at enhancing, equipping and empowering women to contribute to total development. The study is written in less sophisticated language to achieve the goal of blending objective analysis based on evidence-based information for a wider readership.

## **1.4 Methodology and Scope of the Study**

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. This required visits to institutions and organizations, fundamental to the project viability. Key informant interviews were also conducted with some personalities and public figures. Published and unpublished works were also consulted and have been dully and appropriately acknowledged.

The substantive scope of the study covered the year 2000 to 2004 but some comparison was made with previous periods to assess the current trend either as part of the background information or as part of the main write up or both.

The institutions covered were public institutions and political parties. The public institutions were categorized into two broad groups namely constitutionally mandated institutions including public boards, which are the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE), Electoral Commission (EC), the Lands Commissions (LC), and the National Media Commission (NMC). Others are the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). The second group includes main public bureaucratic institutions like the Ministries and Parliament, the Judiciary, Cabinet and local government institutions particularly the district assemblies. Some selected Ministries including the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) were also included.

The political parties were the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP), the People's National Party (PNC), and the Convention People's Party (CPP). The rationale for selecting these institutions was simply to get institutions that would be responsive to the needs of the study.

#### **1.4 Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into six main chapters. The first chapter "Background and Introduction" looks at the background for the research and the historical antecedents to women's participation in politics and public offices with reference to what successive governments and other organizations have done in this direction.

Chapter Two titled "Women and the Political Process in Ghana: 1992-2004" looks at the situation of women in politics. In this chapter, reference is made to the role of political parties, their manifestoes and their practical commitment to women's issues and also considered women's wing of political parties and their effectiveness in addressing and enhancing women's participation in politics including the mechanisms put in place for such programmes or interventions. In addition, women's participation in politics at the local level was addressed. Here, the number of women in the local government system over the years was examined. This is significant because, there have been arguments that women have better chances for political participation at the local level because it sets a conducive atmosphere for them to combine their domestic roles with political aspirations.

Furthermore, one of the advantages of decentralization strongly espoused in the literature is that, it creates an enabling environment for local people to participate in governance and offers them the opportunity to learn the rudiments of governance at the local level as a prelude to taking up key positions at the local level.

The discussion extended to the other component of women in politics to look at actual figures for women's participation at national political level, and ascertain the trend of women's participation for parliamentary positions and the outcome of such efforts.

The Third chapter is titled "Women in Public Offices and Institutions. Here, attention is given to women's position and role in selected government institutions particularly some commissions/boards and other constitutionally constituted bodies.

The Fourth chapter is "Women in the Public Bureaucracy". This chapter looks at the position of women within selected Ministries and how that affect their contribution to the decision making process. It also identifies some of the challenges and ways to address them as perceived by our respondents.

Chapter Five, titled "Education as Tool of Enhancement for Women in Politics and Public Offices" reiterates the importance of education, as a major means of addressing the challenges encountered by women in politics and public offices or those aspiring to such positions. Reference is made to the female enrolment situation in tertiary institutions and how this may impact on them getting into key public offices, recognizing the fact that education is a fundamental prerequisite for these positions.

Chapter Six is "Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations: A Challenge for Political Parties". It focuses on the nexus between the issues raised in the previous sections and their implications for women in politics and administration. On the basis of the findings, some conclusions are drawn and recommendations made for the attention of all stakeholders especially political parties, government, gender/women groups, educational institutions and the general civil society community for positive action especially as we prepare for the 2004 elections and beyond.

## **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The study encountered a number of constraints. Notable among these is access to information and the unwillingness and in fact refusal of some of our key informants to engage in discussion or interviews. Though the purpose of the study was clearly stated in the letter of introduction, some of our respondents, especially the political parties were, very skeptical and not convinced. One political party for instance, even thought (rather surprisingly) that the consultant was only using the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) as a coy for her own hidden political agenda and interests. Another political party also felt that the FES had special links with a particular political party and so was highly reluctant to giving the research team the needed support. In addition, some of our respondents especially from the Ministries and other institutions were not too comfortable granting us the interviews although we had assured them of the aims of the research and anonymity was guaranteed, if they wished for that. Furthermore, for institutions like the EC, the timing of the research coincided with the new voters registration and so information received was very scanty, apparently due to time constraints on the part of officials who were busily engaged. We also have to mention the time limit for the research, which put a lot of pressure on the consultant.

Within the context and in spite of these constraints, considerable efforts were made not to allow these challenges to compromise the quality of the report produced and also to ensure that the overall objectives and intended purposes were achieved.

## **1.6 Historical Antecedents to Women in Politics and Public Office**

The historical antecedents are very crucial since they relay an understanding of the past, a consideration of the present and a focus on the future, which together completes the cycle of analysis. This is because concern about women's role in politics and public offices dates as far back as the pre-colonial period when women were not allowed to acquire any formal education like their men counterparts because of the traditional roles largely assigned to them.

O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers reiterate that in indigenous African societies, women's political position varied extensively across the continent with some wielding extensive authority than others (O' Barr and Firmin-Sellers, 1995: 189). This condition further deteriorated with the advent of colonialism, a situation that persisted for several decades. For O' Barr and Firmin-Sellers, "European administrators imposed a legal and cultural apparatus that undermined women's traditional bases of power; women became politically and economically subordinated and marginalized" (ibid).

The educational system was the worst affected. At the very initial stages of the introduction of education to the colonies, girls were exempted because the colonial administration was only interested in training and equipping young men who will be grounded in the art of governance and statesmanship (Konde, 1992). Though this trend did not continue for the rest of the colonial period, by the time women were allowed to get into the education system, the gender gap between levels of education was quite considerable.

The decision to allow women to get education was only a partial solution to their educational needs because of the gendered nature of courses of study approved for men and women. For instance, women who had access to the educational system were more likely to study home economics than any other course or subject unrelated to home making. Reiterating this, Tsikata notes that the prevailing education at the time of colonialism accentuated discrimination against women not only in the course content but also in numbers and in the taxonomy of jobs (Tsikata 1999: 76). Confirming this, Manu explains that the educational opportunities emphasized good behaviour and feminine skills such as needlework, crocheting and cooking. It was intended to create a pool of "better wives" for the rising crop of educated clerks, teachers, catechists and a few professional men (Manu 1991:110-111).

This disaggregated educational system and structure for women and men had profound multiple effect on the two genders. Whilst the men had the opportunity to be introduced to and acquire experience in the art of governance and politics, and thereby enabling them to occupy key positions, the very opposite happened to women. The fact that in general most women

hardly had the required training also meant that they could not possibly be in key positions in the political and public sphere. The 'private' and the 'public' for women were two distinct arenas, a distinction which was jealously guarded and perpetuated by the patriarchal system, thereby affecting women's role in the political and subsequently the public sphere.

In the Ghanaian setting, one significant area of governance was the prelude to limited constitutional government from the colonial period to the immediate pre-independence period. In the case of constitution making, for instance, women were hardly visible. Constitution making could be considered as a process of constructing a political consensus around constitutionalism. Constitutionalism, on the other hand, is viewed as the art of providing a system of effective restraints on the existence of governmental power, whilst others have identified the term with rule of law and defined it as correct procedures, which are to be followed (Allah-Mensah 2004: 5).

In all these efforts towards constitutions and constitutionalism, women played very negligible roles. For instance, from the first major efforts at constitution making in the country, from 1916, there is hardly any evidence of women's active participation until in the 1969 Constituent Commission and Assembly where there were one and eleven women representatives respectively (Austin and Luckam, 1975). This is not suggestive that representation of other social groups was not enhanced over the years. In deed, from 1916, the twenty-one member legislative council had three paramount chiefs and three educated Ghanaians at the time. These qualifications for representation of Ghanaians through out the colonial period persisted, meaning that women were systematically and formally excluded because of the gendered educational system and the patriarchal traditional ruling system.

### **1.6.1 Ghanaian Women in the Pre-Independence and immediate Post-Independence Era: 1956-1966**

There is ample evidence to substantiate the indispensable role women played in the prelude to independence and immediately after. The role of women was evident in the support given to the main political party of the time, the Convention People's Party (CPP). It is on record that women traders were keen supporters of the CPP government, which also offered financial assistance and supportive services. The women's section of the party, according to Tsikata, was largely responsible for the development of women's section or wings of the party and also for the organization of the youth league (Tsikata 1999:75). The party leadership therefore took this initiative and effort seriously and institutionalized it by making constitutional provisions for a women's league at branch and ward levels as the main organizing framework for women in the party. It was therefore not surprising that the party gave credit to the women for the internal solidarity, cohesion and success of the CPP. Manu records that women were efficient organizers who could bring thousands of people together for a rally at the shortest possible notice (Manu *ibid*: 109).

These attributes actually went beyond the confines of the party to spread to other political organizations involving women viz the formation of women's groups *inter alia*, the Ghana Women's League (GWL) and the Ghana Federation of Women (GFW) and later the National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW) in 1960 (For details see Tsikata, *ibid*: 78-79). In deed, it is recorded that the NCGW and other groups were systematically and strategically co-opted into the CPP and given party membership cards as the only valid membership cards for the members. Notably, it is stated that " the membership card of the party will be the only qualification for membership within these organizations...and no other membership card other than that of the Convention People's Party shall be recognized by these bodies" (Nkrumah 1980:158). Even though there was a very high level of politicization in the formation and subsequent co-optation of the women's groups, it was nevertheless a good beginning as a rallying point.

The prelude to independence however experienced some slight but significant changes. Traditionally, Ghanaian women have had a long history for organization. Again, Tsikata traces the involvement of women in economic

activities and their fight for equality on the economic front as well as their involvement in the political affairs of the nation especially between 1951-1966 (See Tsikata, *ibid*: 77). Thus, with the attainment of independence, many keen social observers expected some changes in the role of women in the political economy because of their onerous contribution to the process of decolonization especially through the CPP.

Upon the attainment of self-government in 1957, the party rewarded the hard work, resilience and general contribution by women to the independence struggle. It is fittingly stated that “an assessment of the CPP government’s policies towards women has noted that it consciously encouraged the participation of women in politics and public life with the result that a few women held high political offices as members of parliament, deputy ministers and district commissioners, and that these were not acts of tokenism, but a recognition of their abilities” (Tsikata *ibid*: 79). In consonance with this, Ghana is noted as one of the first African countries to introduce a quota system for women in 1960. In that year, the CPP passed a law allowing for the nomination and election of ten women to the National Assembly (Tamale, 1999: 23).

Whilst this was a marked departure from the previously existing statusquo, there was still a lot more to be done for an effective representation of women not only in the politics of the country but also in the administrative wheel on which the nation ran. The expectation that the progression towards the consolidation of independence and the nurturing of democracy would see a corresponding progression in the number of women in politics and public offices however suffered a hitch with the onslaught of democratic disruptions and the subsequent ushering in of successive and intermittent coup d’etats. Thus, unfortunately, as would be seen subsequently, the emergence of independence in most African countries did little to change this created statusquo” (*ibid*: 189). Such beautiful beginnings was however not given the needed nurturing as deterioration in the political climate did not augur well for the systematic and sustained development of women’s participation in national politics and in public positions.

Ghana experienced its political and economic hiccups after the first military coup that overthrew the CPP government in 1966. From 1966 until 1992

when another election were held, Ghana's political economy experienced what might be described as uncomfortable and non-progressive political exchanges between the military and civilian governments. This unstable political and economic climate did not only affect the political economy but also social integration and the building up of social capital, the basis for social group formation.

In addition, by their very nature and formation, the military system was not very gender sensitive and hence had very few women in their ranks. In fact, there is no record on any woman taking up or being offered any political position in any of the military regimes except the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) regime. This is indicative of the fact that military regimes in Ghana were not only averse to women's political participation and contribution to public life but also largely inhibited women's full contribution to the development of politics and administration. One regime, which tried to change this perception of the military and women's participation, was the PNDC government, which ruled the country from 1981-1992.

### **1.6.2 The Provisional National Defence Council and Women in Ghana: 1982-1992**

The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government is so far the longest ruling government in the history of Ghana and hopefully could be the longest ever if there are no disruptions in the current system of government. It was under this government that a proto-type of Nkrumah's co-optation strategy took place through the formation of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement (DWM). Whilst members of the movement vouch for its political neutrality and disconnection from the ruling PNDC government, it was evidently clear that this disconnected image was only a shallow presentation.

The 31<sup>st</sup> DWM engaged in a number of economic activities and mobilization efforts that gave some women some respite from economic challenges by creating the enabling environment for them to engage in certain economic activities however minimal. Gari processing machines, day care centers among others were provided to some women groups to enhance their economic status. Although these activities have been lauded in some circles for (arguably) opening up the economic and the political space for

women, they have equally been challenged as too political and therefore not embracing of all Ghanaian women who would have taken advantage of the offered opportunity.

Nonetheless, there is ample evidence supporting the fact that many of the women who had some political experience to contest and even win the district level elections held in 1988 and subsequently in the 1992 general elections were all politically connected to the movement. It was therefore not surprising that majority of the women parliamentarians were National Democratic Congress (NDC) members with strong links to the 31<sup>st</sup> DWM. In other words, the 31<sup>st</sup> DWM created some political opportunity for women's participation in politics at the local and national level.

Consequently, it is not far from the truth to state that, successive coup d'états since 1966, which overthrew legitimately elected governments, pulled down with it, this rare opportunity for women to participate in political and public office. Military regimes and women's political participation were almost contradiction in terms and certainly non-cohabitable. Put differently, intermittent and politically disruptive military interventions were the final straw against women's efforts and attempts at meaningful participation in politics and public life with very micro exceptions. These unpleasant political exchanges between the military and civil administration, which started from 1966, came to a hopeful end after the longest military regime responded to internal and external pressures for a return to democratic governance in the early 1990s, starting with the drafting of a constitution.

### **1.6.3 Women and the Prelude to Democratic Governance in the 1990s: The Constitution Making Period-1991-1992**

Constitution making is a process of constructing a political consensus around constitutionalism. Saunders has rightly stated that every constitution-making project goes through separate phases. But these different stages depend on the practicality of the existing conditions and the needs and expectations of that constitution. The phases may involve first, the agenda setting stage, which deals with the scope, terms of reference, an initial draft of the principles on which the constitution is to be based, agreement on the participants and how the constitution would be finally approved (Saunders 2002).

In Ghana, the commencement of a new era of democratization in the early 1980s is connected with the establishment and work of the National Commission for Democracy (NCD). The NCD was set up by PNDC Law 42 in 1982. Section 32 of the law requires the NCD to perform the functions of an Electoral Commission (EC) and to help in developing a programme for a more effective realization of democracy in Ghana. In addition, it was to educate Ghanaians on the objectives of the revolutionary transformation in order to advance democracy and assess limitations to the achievement of the above which may be due to existing and identified inequalities so as to enable the government address same (Ninsin 1996:98 and Bluwey 1998: 103-104).

As part of the process, the NCD was engaged in a consultative process through regional seminars on “District Assemblies and Evolving Democratic Process”. These regional seminars were organized to collect and collate the views of Ghanaians on the future of democracy in Ghana. Main issues raised by representative groups which included women groups like the 31<sup>st</sup> DWM into these regional for a included issues on human rights particularly workers’ rights, rights of the disabled, children’s rights and women’s rights; basic freedoms of speech, representation, accountability and the need to ensure that language is not a barrier to genuine popular participation in government, responsibility and conduct of officials among others (ibid). Consequently, the (PNDC) put in motion a number of events at the second stage, which included the establishment of the Committee of Experts.

The second stage is the development and design stage. Here, it is important to choose an appropriate body. The two most challenging option at this stage is whether to have an elected representative body or an appointed independent body made up of experts, each of which has its strengths and weaknesses. Saunders, however, argues that a representative body is more favourable to women’s representation than a body of experts, which always marginalizes the representation of women because a constituent assembly gives women “strategic advantage” in representation. In Ghana, the PNDC established a Committee of Experts (CE) and later the Consultative Assembly (CA) (Suanders, 2002).

### **1.6.3.1 Women and The Committee of Experts**

With the presentation of the NCD report on the uncompromising demand of Ghanaians for a return to constitutional rule, the PNDC government promulgated the PNDC Law 252 by which The Committee of Experts was established. The Committee of Experts was to draft a constitution for the Fourth Republic. Section 4 of the Law provided that the Committee shall in its deliberations take into account the following:

- The Report of the National Commission for Democracy of 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1991, on “Evolving a True Democracy”;
- The abrogated constitutions of Ghana of 1957, 1960, 1969 and 1979 and any other constitutions;
- Such other matters relating to proposals for a draft constitution as the Council may refer to it;
- Any other matter, which in the opinion of the Committee is reasonably related to the foregoing”.

The membership of the Committee of Experts appointed by the PNDC did not however attract criticisms from the general public in any glaring fashion although others suggested that the term ‘experts’ did not really reflect the composition of the membership. (Committee of Experts Report 1991:1). (See Appendix I for Names of Members of the Constitutional Committee).

The membership of the Committee of Experts give cause for worry as far as the gender composition is concerned. Out of nine members only two, which is a paltry 22%, were women. It cannot be denied that issues of interest to women could not have received the needed attention even if the two members were expectedly vocal and if the other male members were extra liberal gender advocates (ibid: 8).

In spite of this, there were references to issues that needed to consider gender as a factor. For instance, the Committee recommended for a Council of Ministers, which should be appointed on the basis of special expertise, experience and equitable regional and gender representation. In a rather comprehensive exposition, the Committee laid emphasis on women’s rights to cover issues on debilitating customary practices, female circumcision, maternity issues, property rights, guaranteed equal conditions of work and equal representation and participation of women and men

on boards and in appointments to public positions. It is prominent to realize that these comprehensive expositions on the rights of women were ironically cut down in the 1992 constitution, which was debated, by a constitutional assembly which had more women represented than the membership of the Committee of Experts (ibid: 8).

On the other hand, the Committee did not exhibit gender alertness in its proposed criteria for composition of the Council of State. It recommended that “there should be a Council of State which is national and non-partisan in character and consists of eminent personalities selected on the basis of experience, expertise, competence and sensitivity to national unity.” The Council of State was expected to help in ensuring responsible and democratic governance and fidelity to the basic tenets of constitutionalism, effective government, stability and national harmony. By inference, one can surmise that, by not recognizing gender as an important factor for the composition of the membership of the Council of State, the Committee of Experts implied indirectly that gender consideration may not be a vital basis for achieving effective, democratic government, stability and national harmony and the basic tenets of constitutionalism; an implication which is problematic for the running of democracy. We may however sound an alibi here that the Committee did not make reference to gender as a factor here probably because it had already indicated that there should be equal representation and participation by men and women on public boards and positions (Allah-Mensah 2004: 15).

The illustrious fact to note is that for societies which have serious levels of gender insensitivity due to several factors, it is imperative that in matters of concern and especially where the role of that institution is crucial in the democratic development of the nation, the constitution be specific with regard to gender and the role of women and not rely on generalizations which could be interpreted or misinterpreted from any perspective, and thereby pave the way for easy manipulations.

The important role played by the Committee of Experts cannot be underestimated although a section of the Ghanaian public at the time assumed they were working under the directorship of the ruling PNDC military government. Nugent succinctly captures this by noting that “up to this point, the

regime had maintained a vice-like grip over proceedings...the opposition demanded that a constituent assembly be elected on a constituency basis, but the PNDC consistently refused for the reason that such a body may be hijacked by the opposition party...and debar Rawlings and other PNDC functionaries from standing for office” (Nugent 1995 :216-217).. Even so, according to Bluwey “although the Committee sounded as if it was merely the mouth-piece of the PNDC, its conclusions reflected the political preferences of its membership” (Bluwey 1998: 103-104). This conclusion by Bluwey however may not be acceptable to keen observers at the time.

Despite these misgivings, it is a fact that it was the report of the Committee of Experts that laid the solid base for the work of the Consultative Assembly (CA), which finalized discussions on the constitution. Bluwey states that one of the contributions the Committee of Experts made to the transition process was its proposals, which “prompted several eminent groups to seek representation in the Consultative Assembly” (bluwey, *ibid*).

The third stage in the process is public consultation, discussion and communication. As rightly pointed out, it is necessary to put in place strategies that would reduce the tendency of particular groups to dominate the discussion whilst at the same time encouraging the involvement of groups that are likely to be reticent like rural and other disadvantaged groups including women. (Saunders 2002). This leads us to the Consultative Assembly and the finality of their work through the referendum.

### **1.6.3.2 The Consultative Assembly, Membership and Women**

The Consultative Assembly (CA) was established under PNDC Law 253, 1991 and inaugurated on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1991 to formulate the final constitutional document using the report of the Committee of Experts as the basis for their deliberations. During its inauguration, the then Chairman of the PNDC government, Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings was emphatic that the responsibility of the CA was not to the government of the PNDC, but that their responsibility was first and foremost to the generality of both current and future citizens of the country. More significantly, he made reference to the contribution of women to the socio-economic development and dynamics in the Ghanaian society and the relevance the Committee of Experts had given to the status of women and urged the CA to consider in addition,

measures that will enhance equality in opportunity and participation in the social and political decision making processes (Ninsin 1996: 119,123- 124).

It is vital then to examine the composition of the CA in the light of the representation of women and their contributions to the debate in the entire process within the framework of several factors.

The membership of the CA was an interesting one from a gender perspective. Prior to the establishment of the assembly, Ninsin states that when rural support proved inadequate, the PNDC government turned to urban informal sector agents. As a result, in 1990 it sponsored the formation and registration of over thirty (30) informal organizations. From this, the only exclusively women's organizations were by inference, the Hairdressers Association of Ghana and the Chop Bar Keepers and Cooked Food Sellers Association. On the other hand, the only group, which did not have women as members also by inference, were the National Garage Owners Association, Refrigeration and Air conditioning Workshop Owners Association, the Ghana Gold and Silver Smiths Association, Radio and Television Repairers Association, Butchers Association and Video Operations Association (Ninsin 2002: 113-137). These are almost exclusively male professions in the Ghanaian society and would therefore, presumably, not have any women as members.

Interestingly, some of these groups were among the representatives of the Consultative Assembly. Out of the 260 members, 117 were to be elected from the District Assemblies (DAs). In addition, the government directly appointed 22 members. Most notably, there were 121 members drawn from 62 identifiable groups, many were those, which were assisted by the government to register as mentioned above. Among the identifiable groups were hitherto non-existent political groups like hairdressers, fishmongers, drinking and chop bar owners. Other women's groups represented were the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) controlled then by the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement which alone had 10 seats (Bluwey 1998: 103-104).

The number allocated to the NCWD and the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement was both politically and culturally significant. From a political stand point, it was the undeclared wing of the PNDC government and so their presence and that of other identifiable groups could enhance the chances of the government. But much more significantly, the number of women's groups, from the hairdressers and dressmakers to the chop bar operators association and then the 31 December and NCWD, was an important landmark for women in Ghanaian politics especially under a military regime. Perhaps this argument would be more outstanding when it is considered against the backdrop of representatives of other 'intellectual' groups like the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), Christian Council (CC) and the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) and the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), which were allocated only one seat each (ibid).

If numbers were anything to go by then women would have been better represented in comparison with other groups as mentioned above. Nonetheless, the participation of women in the Consultative Assembly deliberations was not commensurate with their numerical strength. A member of the CA faintly recalls that though there were some identified women who were very vocal and made significant contributions to discussions especially on women matters; majority did not perform to expectation<sup>1</sup>. This, in deed, has implications for the content and outcome of the constitution with regard to women's issues and concerns.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

It is evidently clear from the above that, women have endeavoured and struggled for political participation since pre-independence times and played critical role in the prelude to independence under the aegis of the CPP and beyond. With the return to democratic rule in the early 1990s, it is crucial to examine how women picked up the remnants of their contribution to the political process from the early 1990s, the subject matter of the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Professor Kwame Ninsin, a member of the CA.

# **CHAPTER TWO:**

## **WOMEN AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN GHANA: 1992-2004**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The result of the work of the Consultative Assembly was the 1992 constitution, which was accepted through a referendum. Some of the critical issues the preamble elaborates on are affirmation of the unity of all Ghanaians as one people with commitment to certain basic principles like probity, justice, freedom and accountability. The people are the confirmed sovereign based on the principle of universal adult suffrage, rule of law and the protection and preservation of fundamental human rights (including women's rights) (1992 Constitution: xxvii).

The constitution serves as the backbone for governance and as the conduit for enhancing the participation of the citizenry in the governance and decision-making processes. For otherwise voiceless people, this is a particularly rare opportunity for them and women are no exceptions. The constitution is very clear on giving opportunities to women because they are an integral part of the people in whom the country's sovereignty resides and in whose names and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised (Article 1 (1)).

On the fundamental human rights and freedoms, article 12 (2) notes categorically that "every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this chapter but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest". It is against this background that the participation of women in the political processes and the administrative sector becomes relevant and crucial. The next section looks at the political participation of women since 1992 at both the national and local levels.

## **2.2 Women's Political Roles in Ghana Since 1992**

Women's political role in Ghana has grown and expanded steadily since the drafting of the 1992 Constitution; but whether this is effective in terms of their meaningful participation in Ghanaian politics is a matter, which needs to be analysed.

Democracy is a means of governance, which requires participation. Participation and empowerment are two of the fundamental concepts in the democratic discourse, which have also received wider definitional attention. Participation is one of the cornerstones of people-centred development and has gained attention as part of the push for effective development practice. It was meant to bring an end to the top-down strategies and actions and to increase more attention to bottom-up and inclusive practice. (Rahnema 1993:117). In very narrow terms, participation is explained to be the active engagement of citizens with public institutions.

According to Nelson and Wright, (2000), there is a distinction between participation as a means and participation as an end. As a means, participation is used to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively or cheaply; and as an end, it has to do with a community setting up a process to control its own development. In spite of the diversity, it implies power relations between members of a community on one hand and between them and the state and its institutions on the other hand. Thus, participation goes beyond compensatory limits if there is power shifts between people and policy-makers and resource holding institutions (pp.190-191).

Governments' interest in the concept and practice of participation were for different reasons. For instance, governments did not perceive it as a threat to them; participation has also become an economically appealing proposition because sustainability of projects have been linked to active and informed participation by the poor and voiceless (Rahnema.1993: 117). Uma Lele comes strongly on this when she stated that understanding the rural social structure can contribute to delegation of genuine responsibility of administration to local organizations. This kind of participation, which is distinct from the paternalistic approach, is critical for the long-term viability of development programs beyond the stage of donor involvement (Lele 1975: 99).

More importantly, participation has become a politically attractive slogan especially with the re-launch of the democracy project in third world countries dubbed the 'third wave' by Samuel Huntington, which expanded the participation discourse. Politically, popular participation involves a situation where the citizens are invited to express their views on issues of governance, an imperative for democracy. What has been noted is that, during the 1950s and 1960s the definition ascribed to participation was more political reflecting in voting, party membership, voluntary associations and protest movements. However by the 1970s, participation took on more of an administrative and implementation focus because of the development challenges of the decade which stressed more on popular participation than just participation (Ayee, *ibid* and Rahmena *ibid*). Nevertheless, this distinction has become very blurred because of the current emphasis on good governance as a basis for achieving sustainable development.

More specifically, political participation has been defined by Verba and Nie as legal activities which directly or indirectly points to influencing the selection of and the actions of government officials (1972:2). In addition, it involves partaking in the formulation, passage and implementation of public policies with more emphasis on representative democracy (Richardson 1983, see Allah-Mensah, 2003: 141). It is therefore an empowering process that allows people to do their own analysis. Thus, true democracy would need to ascribe to the more radical conceptualization of participation as a transformative process.

But more than just being a politically attractive slogan, the third wave of democratization whirled along with it the need for effective and meaningful participation by the electorate especially otherwise voiceless groups like women. This emphasis on participation by the electorate has developed slowly but steadily over the years. Thus, women's participation or involvement in the democratic and decision-making process is critical for the survival and legitimation of the entire process. Meintjes noted this in very clear terms when she wrote about the prospects for democracy, citizenship and equality for South African Women. To her, "if the new democratic dispensation simply adopts procedural and conventional liberal constitutional, legal and political forms which underpin western systems of government, an effective democracy which includes the participation on equal basis of all

its citizens will elude South Africa... Unless these rights are accompanied by access to property, educational institutions and empowerment opportunities, empowered citizenship will remain a dream....”(Meintjes 1995: 7). Empowerment thus becomes an important part of participatory approaches.

Bauzon, states that, the meaning of democracy has been altered to surpass the expansion of political rights and popular participation in government and politics to embrace the empowerment of people in the pursuit of their own economic and social well-being (Bauzon 1992: 16). Empowerment is thus concerned with the processes by which people become aware of their own interests and how those relate to the interests of others, in order to both participate from a strong decision making position and to actually influence such decisions. It therefore goes beyond participation in decision-making to include the processes that make people to perceive themselves as being able and entitled to make decisions (Rowland 1997: 14).

Empowerment is vital for poor and marginalized people if they are to change their situation. With particular reference to women, empowerment is considered as a process and the capacity of women to organize themselves in order to increase their own self reliance and internal strength, assert their independent right to determine and make choices in life, influence the direction of change through control over material and non-material resources which will then challenge and eliminate their own subordination (ibid: 16-17).

On a more political front, women’s empowerment involves gaining a voice, having mobility and establishing a public presence and gaining control over power structures or being a vital part of the power structure and power relations. Substantiating this further, it is stated that “empowerment equals measures aimed at creating the conditions for wider representation of women in all important decision making processes and bodies like governmental bodies and decision-making positions in the public administration and by making full use of their talents and experience (UNDP 1997: 22).

### 2.3 Women and Political Participation at the National Level: 1992-2004

Promoting women in political life requires attention to facilitate links and dialogue between women inside and outside political structures in order to build accountability, especially in periods of legislative change (Baden 1999: 7). It has been observed that the presence of significant numbers of women in parliament can help improve the quality of debate and policy-making. Since 1992, Ghanaian women have shown consistent enthusiasm to contribute to the democratic process in different ways and at different levels. Although the challenge is enormous, there is consistent progress being made.

In 1992, Ghana had her first experiment with multi-party politics once again after more than a decade of military governance under the PNDC government. From the presidential candidacy perspective, no women contested even at the party level. The available statistics are indicative that in terms of real figures, women's numbers in the legislature has not increased in any significant way although the number of women contestants have witnessed a steady increase. Table 1 gives the figures since 1960.

**Table 1:** No of Women in Parliament by Year

<b>Year</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>1969</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Seat</b>	104	104	140	140	200	200	200
<b>Women</b>	10	19	1	5	16	18	19
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>

**Source:** Adapted from Different Sources

The percentages have been quite dismal although there is some insignificant increment by figures. What is notable is that, the number of women who shows interest in contesting for parliamentary positions have rather gone up steadily since 1992 as depicted in Table 2.

**Table 2:** No. of Women Contestants and No. Elected

Year	1996	2000
Contestants	53	95
Winners	18	19
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>20%</b>

**Source:** Adapted from Different Sources.

There is no gainsaying the fact that since 1992, the number of women contestants has increased steadily. This is a proof of women's willingness and preparedness to participate in the political process. Between 1996 and 2000, whilst the number of interested women increased by almost 100%, there was only an insignificant number in the increase to the number of elected women to parliament. Though it may be true that numbers in themselves do not necessarily mean corresponding increase in the level of debate, there is equally no guarantee that men are necessarily the best representatives of women issues and concerns. On moral grounds and for the sanctity and meaning of democracy to come alive, women have a duty to represent not only their own but to contribute their unique quota to the democratic development and efforts at consolidation. Besides, one major channel that has the potential to increase the role of women in politics is political parties to which we now turn.

## **2.4 Political Parties and Women's Political Roles**

Mainwaring makes a challenging statement that, in spite of citizen's dissatisfaction with political parties in many countries, parties continue to be the main agents of representation and are virtually the only actors with access to elected positions in democratic politics (Mainwaring 1999: 11). As institutions, political parties have greater access to state power if they win elections. They therefore have the tendency to affect policy processes and more significantly contribute to the consolidation when their legitimacy is assured. Consolidation of democracy has important implications for all aspects of governance including the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies needed to effect change. Parties can effect these

changes through translation of the party's manifesto into a policy (Allah-Mensah, 2001: 122-123). Furthermore, due to their powerful positions, parties can give voice to some interests and mute others which can have a negative impact on the political atmosphere within which they operate.

Political affiliation can influence a woman's chance of winning elections. It has been arguably stated that women candidates from ruling parties are usually better positioned, equipped and placed than those in the opposition and far better than those who run without any party affiliation, that is, as independent candidates (Allah-Mensah, 2001: 124-125). This may be supported by the situation in the 1996 and 2000 general elections and the number of women contestants, their party affiliation and the number who actually won their seats and what this implies for women's role in politics.

#### **2.4.1 Women and the 1996 and 2000 General Elections**

In 1996, there were 53 women contestants for parliamentary positions mainly on the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Party and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) tickets. Those who won (18) were only about 32% of the total number of contestants with thirteen (13) being NDC members and the remaining five (5) being NPP members. There were no independent candidates who contested or won the elections. See Table 3 below on women candidates by region and by party.

**Table 3: Women Parliamentary Candidates by Region**

Region	No. of Contestants	No. of Winners	Party NDC	Party NPP	% Age of Winners
Ashanti	9	2	1	1	22
Brong Ahafo	5	3	3	-	60
Central	8	4	3	1	50
Eastern	7	1	1	-	14
Gt. Accra	8	4	3	1	38
Northern	3	2	2		67
U/ West	0	-	-	-	0
U/East	3	1	1		33
Volta	3	0	-	-	0
Western	7	1	-	1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>

**Source:** Extracted Form Parliamentary Results, 1996

Women aspiring candidates did well in only two regions comparatively; these are the Central and the Northern regions with 50% and 67% success rate respectively. The percentages can be deceptive because looking at the figures the Northern region had only three and two were successful, whilst Ashanti region had nine representatives with only two successful candidates. Thus, in terms of women aspirants, there were a lot of hopeful ones though the turn out was far below expectation.

The NDC's success with women candidates was not too surprising looking at the background of the contestants and the role and connection of the 31<sup>st</sup> DWM in enhancing women's position in the country, though in a very politicized way. The NPP was at a disadvantage because they had already boycotted the 1992 parliamentary elections due to accusations of manipu-

lations and vote rigging after the presidential elections. This political decision which has been described variously by political commentators as strategic on one hand and on the other hand as non-tactical did not allow the NPP to develop its political platform well enough beside other challenges the party faced. There was however some changes on the political plain with respect to women's political interests and ambition in the 2000 general elections.

#### **2.4.2 Women and the 2000 General Elections**

The 2000 general election was keenly contested by the seven registered political parties (See Table 4). There were a lot of interesting factors in the 2000 general elections. These included the formation of the National Reform Party (NRC), an offshoot of the NDC, the robust role of the media and the crossing of carpets by key political functionaries from one party to the other but notably from the main opposition to the NDC party. The enthusiasm that characterized the election also reflected in the number of women who showed interests in contesting the election for political positions. From a high of about hundred (100) aspiring women candidates, the number dropped to Ninety-five (95) by election day. Table 4 gives the break down by party and region.

**Table 4:** Female Parliamentary Candidates by Party and Region

Region	POLITICAL PARTIES								Total
	NDC	NPP	NRP	PNC	UGM	GCPP	CPP	IND	
Ashanti	5	2	4	2	-	-	4	-	17
B.Ahafo	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	5
Central	4	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	8
Eastern	3	-	2	2	-	-	-	2	9
Gt.Accra	3	2	6	4	2	-	3	-	20
Northern	2	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	6
U/East	1	3	1	1	2	-	2	-	10
U/West	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	4
Volta	1	-	1	2	-	-	3	1	8
Western	1	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>95</b>

**Source:** Summary of Parliamentary Nominations, Research and Monitoring Dept, Electoral Commission, adapted from Allah –Mensah, 2001, p. 135

The NDC was the party that fielded the highest number of female candidates (approximately 23.2% of total) at the close of nominations on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2000, followed by the NRP with 21%, the NPP, 17.9%, and the CPP, 16.8%. The United Ghana Movement (UGM) fielded the lowest number of female candidates, that is 4.2%. Not surprisingly, the GCPP did not field any candidate and so could not have fielded any woman. In this case we may contestably argue that the NDC, the NRP, the NPP and the CPP were the most gender sensitive parties. Thus, from 53 women contestants in 1996, there was an appreciable increase to 95, a 56% increase which was a step in the right direction, though not being oblivious of the fact that numbers per se may not be the solution but a good kicking point.

This phenomenal increase in the number of women contestants could perhaps be attributed to the commitment of all contesting political parties to ensure that women are given the chance to participate effectively in the political process. This was in support of the forty (40) percent of women parliamentarians recommended by the “Cabinet of the Republic of Ghana’s Statement of Policy on the Implementation of Proposals and Recommendations for Affirmative Action Towards Equality of Rights and Opportunities for Women in Ghana” (Daily Graphic, 2000). On this note, each of the parties made commitments that confirmed their support to women in politics. For instance, the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP) highlighted the need for capacity building for women and education to conscientize them on political issues and processes. The 31<sup>st</sup> December Women’s Movement’s role in this direction or efforts did not escape the comments by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) which also asserted that groups and networks affiliated to the party were being given appropriate education and sensitization for proper action and follow ups.

On their part, the Convention Peoples’ Party (CPP) reiterated the challenges facing women and their impact on their aspirations to high political offices and encouraged political parties to demonstrate their commitment through nominations and appointments. The New Patriotic Party affirmed its position on democracy built on equality and proposed that where a man and a woman were equally qualified for a seat they were both contesting, the woman would be selected, whilst the National Reform Party (NRP) was more radical in their approach. To the NRP, a revolution or remodeling of politics to include party activities at the grassroots level where women are most active and visible in politics would afford them the opportunity to change the status quo. In addition, the NRP recommended the long-term training for younger women to groom them for the rigours of political life. Adding to this, the Peoples National Convention, (PNC), expressed the view that, women who qualified under party requirements should be encouraged to contest (Ofei-Aboagye 2000:8-9 in Allah-Mensah 2001:133-134).

These declared stance taken by the political parties were consolidated in a resolution in which they affirmed their recognition of the challenges women interested in politics encounter and the Electoral Commission’s encourage-

ment to political parties to “adopt, publicize and implement clear measures and positive actions to increase the number of women parliamentary aspirants. (Allah-Mensah 2001: 133).

In spite of all these commitments and good will shown by the parties and the Electoral Commission (EC), the actual number of women who won was far below expectation. (See Table 5). This implies that, whilst political parties, either willingly or by legislative requirement may field women parliamentary candidates, there is no automaticity of success for the women. Consequently, they need to go beyond this and do extensive sensitization of the electorate to understand the need to vote for qualified women. This is a challenge that needs the support of all stakeholders.

**Table 5:** Women Elected MPs by Region and Party

PARTY	REGION										TOTAL
	C	W	V	E	A	N	UW	UE	GA	BA	
NDC	3	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	9
NPP	1	3	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

**Source:** Public Affairs Department, Electoral Commission of Ghana, Extracted from Allah-Mensah, 2000, p. 136.

After the elections, the evidence was that the two relatively well-organized parties, which happen to be the two main political parties, were the only parties, which had some of their women candidates winning the elections. In fact, only about 18.9% of women candidates were successful as MPs. This seem to give credence to the suggestion that the political parties women aspiring political candidates associate themselves with, is a key determinant for the political success of women. This is not to say that all women should join the same political party. What it implies is that, political parties should make it a duty to ensure that they are well organized and firmed up to ensure the spread of victory among different political parties. When this happens, it is expected that, women’s issues will not only assume broad dimensions, but will permeate all political traditions and circles.

## **2.5 The Prevailing Situation of Political Parties and Women in Politics**

For the avoidance of being accused of being gender insensitive and for not encouraging women into the political party fold, almost all political parties have women wings as part of their structural organization. The creation of women's wings of political parties is based on certain reasons. Chigudu and Tchigwa (1995:2-4) note among other things that, they are created as a way of legitimizing the existence of political parties and serve as the party's leadership acknowledgement of the need to secure electoral victories by capturing women's votes. In addition, some political parties perceive the creation of women's wings as part of the call for women's empowerment and therefore make them appear gender sensitive enough in the eyes of the general public. However, Allah-Mensah argues that, the creation of women's wings of political parties does not necessarily make the later gender sensitive and gender-friendly.

Nonetheless, their existence should be exploited to enhance the ideals of equal representation and push up the political party's policy agenda on the genuine concerns confronting women in general but especially those who have political ambitions. The "wings" should be used as conduits to "fly" key gender and women's issues to the high ranks of the party for wholistic and comprehensive attention and action. This is one means by which the existence of these substructures can effectively be utilized for the mutual benefit of the party and women on one hand and the nation and democracy on the other (Allah-Mensah, 2001:131).

Surveys conducted with some political parties in connection with this study made some interesting revelations on the issue of women in politics and public offices. The parties in question here are the NDC, the NPP, the PNC, the GCPP and the CPP. The structure for the discussion would be the party manifesto, the position of women in the party leadership structure and the challenges encountered by women in or aspiring for key leadership positions in the party.

### **2.5.1 The National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Women**

The seventy-six (76) page 2000 Manifesto of the NDC dedicated about five (5) paragraphs to affirmative action<sup>2</sup>. It made reference to the NDC government's adoption of the programme of Affirmative Action for women, which inter alia, makes commitment to forty (40) percent women's representation in executive positions and at all governmental levels. A women's desk was also established at the presidency. There were also statements in the manifesto, which made reference to the party's commitment to implementing the Beijing Plan of Action, the African Plan for Action and the National Affirmative Action Policy, including the proposal for a forty (40) percent representation of women at conferences and congresses of the party and in government and public service. In the next four years, according to the party, it will continue to implement policies aimed at mainstreaming women into national affairs. In addition, the party was to promote increased female access to educational, health, nutrition, employment and other socio-economic infrastructure and services and improve the institutional capacities of key women-oriented organizations.

The manifesto further stated that, the party as government would intensify public education against negative socio-cultural practices that discriminate against women and enact legislation to safeguard the dignity of women and create conditions to enable their advancement. Moreover, the party affirmed its belief in women's rights as natural rights and would work to ensure that "men and women stand side by side as equal partners in progress" (National Democratic Congress 2000 Manifesto, Ghana: Spreading the Benefit of Development: 8-9).

Perhaps, it may not be fair to judge the party on what it intended to do if it won power in the 2000 elections. Nonetheless, political parties have ways of influencing policies in favour of certain constituencies like that of women and especially within the party hierarchy. The level and nature of women's involvement in internal party organization, could give an indication to the commitment of a political party to its commitment in a manifesto. The con-

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<sup>2</sup> The National Democratic Congress and indeed all the Parties contacted made claims to revision of their Manifestoes. The study could therefore only use the 2000 Manifestoes of the political parties.

tent of the manifesto on women issues did not seem to reflect in the party's leadership structure.

This is not to say that the NDC party did not have any affirmative action programmes. In deed, the election of the national and representatives at other levels saw women contestants, though mainly for positions like treasurer, vice and secretaries, a phenomenon which is widespread in organizational formation in Ghana, from educational institutions (formal) to home town clubs (informal). But even that, the women have not had the manifesto commitment reflected in their positions and roles in the party structure. One regional women's organizer attributed this to a colonial legacy which had persisted and transmitted into contemporary times.

The Greater Accra Regional Women's Organizer, in the presence of the first deputy Women's Organizer who doubles as the deputy women's organizer for Ayawaso East, stated that, at the time of conducting the interviews, three (3) women were actually contesting for the primaries in the region and one had already lost the election. For the primaries, she noted that, there is no party support for anybody irrespective of gender.

Though some form of assistance is given, they are mainly in the form of providing party paraphernalia and nothing beyond. This put a lot of restriction financially on women who would like to contest. The financial problem was the most challenging for the women aspirants. Besides the financial problems, other disturbing issues related to intolerance by some men, who simply did not understand or fathom the reasons why women would want to compete with them for parliamentary slots. Such men still believe in the separation of public from the private spheres; for such men, women should confine themselves, their interests and activities to the later.

It is therefore not surprising that they (women) receive very little support from the men who sometimes call them names when they endeavour to state their (women's) position or views on an issue of national or party significance and interest. All of these have strings to the erroneously negative perception some men have about women in politics as being promiscuous. Disturbingly, some women colleagues also have these perceptions just because, to such women, due to the challenging and competitive nature of rising to the top of the party hierarchy, achieving such feat is not possible

without being promiscuous.

The solution to these and other problems experienced by women in politics, according to our respondents, is in education which will serve as a clearing channel of this persistent colonial mentality and secondly as a development tool for women to equip them for political positions. Interestingly, there is a recommendation for a concerted effort by all women devoid or less of partisan politics since the later is, in fact, divisive rather than cohesive of women's ranks. Exhibiting a very positive sense of boldness, the regional women's organizer noted that women can make it and so should not be deterred by any actions or inactions or omissions and commission by any man and with all respect fight for equality. Her expressed optimism in the future of women was on a brighter note and an encouragement for more women to put their hands to the wheel and not turn back.

### **2.5.2 The New Patriotic Party (NPP)**

In the forty-seven (47) page 2000 manifesto of the NPP party, there were four paragraphs dedicated to "opportunities for women". It begins with acknowledgement of the contribution of women to the family and the economy, to the extent that trading and agriculture would never have been what they are without the dominant inputs of women. Nonetheless, according to the manifesto, the voice of women is not sufficiently heard in government and the legislature. The NPP fully welcomes the new international agenda of empowerment of women, and an NPP government will move beyond merely talking about it to ensuring that it is effected in Ghana (Agenda for Positive Change, Manifesto 2000 of the New Patriotic Party).

Furthermore, the manifesto stated that, an NPP government would repeal laws, which interfere with the attainment of full equitable treatment of women and will enact laws, which will ensure the attainment of equal rights for women and the reinforcement of their empowerment. The manifesto also promised to strengthen women's groups; especially the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), to ensure that the Ghanaian woman's voice is heard at the highest levels. Moreover, women will be encouraged to be part of the policy-making process, through sensitization on their civic responsibilities.

It also promised that, women's participation in the economic, political and social life of the nation would be properly acknowledged and enhanced. Under the party's industry-revival program, female-owned and female-headed enterprises would have greater access to credit on favoured terms. Such a programme would also support female entrepreneurial activities and initiatives and assist women venturing into business or self-employment. In a final statement, the manifesto mentioned that in order to ensure implementation of the policies on women affairs, an NPP government would establish a Women's Ministry with the Minister being a cabinet member.

Perhaps, the most visible adherence to these statements is the establishment of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) with the NCWD as a department of the Ministry. According to the National Vice Chairperson of the Party, the creation of MOWAC was one of the major successes of government to its bid to protect the interests and rights of women. She noted that "the creation of MOWAC is a holistic national response to the varying challenges of empowering women and children, ensuring and protecting their rights and advocating for changing traditional and cultural practices and attitudes which, denies them equality (Ghanaian Times, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004: 10).

At the party level, the encounters of women are not too different from that of the NDC. The bulk of the women executives are within the women's wing and at lower ranks at the national level. For instance, in an eighteen (18) - member national executive body only two (2) (11%) are women. These are the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Vice Chairperson and the National Women's Organizer. With the nineteen (19)-member support staff, five (5) (26%) are women.

Support from male colleagues have been quite mixed. Whilst some of the men give different forms of support to encourage and enhance the performance of the women, and in addition, acknowledging the difficulties and multiple challenges, others, like their counterparts in the NDC, are subtly antagonistic towards women who express their views and appear to have their own independent stance on issues and concerns of the party and the nation.

The reasons are neither too farfetched nor too different from the common knowledge that women who are in politics have 'transcended' their bound-

aries and 'strayed' into unchartered territories. In other words they have criss-crossed the 'traditionally allocated' space to them as a gender as far as political economy issues are concerned.

Another challenge the NPP women executives and all those women in the party aspiring to higher political offices encounter beside the above is financial constraints. This is very crucial because of the economic status of many women in Ghana and the fact that poverty in Ghana is most widespread among women than men. For women interested in contesting parliamentary slots on the party's ticket for the 2004 elections, this is an even greater challenge because aspiring parliamentary candidates interested in seats already held by NPP Members of Parliament (MPs) are expected to pay eleven million (11,000,000) cedis for nomination forms and contesting fee. One million of the amount is for the form with the remaining being the contesting fee. The reason given by the party's General Secretary was that "the seats are safe and also because the party needed funds for its electioneering campaigns" (Ghanaian Times, April 17, 2004: 10).

This is a clear contradiction of the party's manifesto, which states "the NPP government will repeal laws which interfered with the attainment of full equitable treatment of women and the reinforcement of their empowerment," (NPP Manifesto 2000: 33). This is especially disturbing because of the arguments rightly advanced by some gender advocates and activists that parties should consider giving 'safe seats' to women parliamentary candidates as a measure towards increasing the number of women in parliament. Expatiating on these, an administrator of the NPP noted that, the implementation of the party's affirmative action is easier with appointive positions than with elective ones because the latter is competitive and quite difficult to influence in any way without sounding undemocratic. This is, in spite of, the fact that women are highly encouraged to contest. Nonetheless, he was quick to add that the selection of candidates is very strategic and dependent on a number of factors including the strength of the party and its opponent's choice of candidate for a particular constituency. Put differently, the party is directed more by strategic steps than what may controversially be described as 'gender gimmicks' by most political parties.

### **2.5.3 The People's National Convention (PNC)**

The People's National Convention (PNC) had a rather modest six (6)-page manifesto consisting of four (4) to ten (10) line 29 paragraphs. Each of these paragraphs is devoted to key aspects of the economy like science and technology, labour relations, economic policy and women. According to the PNC, a PNC led government would uphold UN and all other conventions on women, and create ministry for women to increase the awareness of the critical and vital role females play. It would also help to assuinate the role of females in the nation, that is cabinet, ministry, national day for women, as well as support and encourage the formation on academic institution campuses, a system for integrating women in national development (PNC Manifesto: Economic Prosperity Now, January 2000: 4).

It must be admitted that some of the things captured in the PNC manifesto is not too clear, yet the party can be considered to have an agenda for women especially as portrayed in its women's wings. Beyond that, the PNC states that pregnant women and mothers on maternity leave would receive free medical care and 20% salary allowances respectively when voted into power in the forthcoming 2004 elections. In addition, with their firm support for the Domestic Violence Bill, a PNC led government, would ensure that the rights of women and children were safeguarded, using education as the channel.

In addition, it would work with stakeholders to develop a women's manifesto that would be the mobilization machinery for making gender issues cross-cutting in Ghana's political processes. Furthermore, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) would be restructured to be more responsive to the peculiar needs of women and children and not merely as a loan-disbursing outfit. These were all part of the new manifesto of the party, which was, according to party officials, at its final stages (The Chronicle, April 16, 2004, The Ghanaian Times, April 17<sup>th</sup> 2004: 10).

At the party level, the Acting National Women's Organizer stated that more women are showing interest in politics and the party's position is to encourage more women and even reserve certain positions and encourage more women to acquire knowledge and some experience by attending seminars and workshops that would enhance their capacities. Although, only one

woman had shown interest at the time of the data collection for the position of the MP, she was hopeful that the number of women who would file for these positions would be more than five (the number for 2000). Some hope was also expressed that after the congress of May 28, 2004, the number of women within the party hierarchy would increase. At the time of data collection, out of the thirteen (13) positions within the party hierarchy, there is only one woman, which is a paltry 7.7%. This was not going to change because of the composition of the declared candidates. For the positions of the Chairmanship, the General Secretary, Treasurer, National Youth Organizer, National Organizer and Women's Organizer, it was only the later, which was being contested by two women, leaving all the other positions to male contestants (Daily Graphic, April 26, 2004).

However, getting more women into positions in the party and in politics generally require some financial strength which is one of the problems encountered by most women political aspirants. The other problems include the balance between married life and political career. For the PNC, there was no strong expression of male colleagues not being supportive.

#### **2.5.4 The Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP)**

The GCPP did not have a known manifesto in the last general elections and claim that the party is on course working on a new manifesto. Interestingly, according to the National Women's Organizer (NWO), the highest decision making body of the party, the Board of Trustees, is chaired by a woman. Though the party has not yet selected parliamentary candidates, it intends to offer 30% of slots to women out of the 230 parliamentary seats the party intends fielding candidates for. The NWO, advancing the party's popular stance or perhaps slogan, 'domestication', interestingly stated that the slogan is attractive to women and accounts for more women joining the ranks of the party. According to her, women joining the party find the 'domestication' jargon appealing to them because they believe they can rely on themselves, which they have done all this while to produce to fend for themselves and their families. For her, this coincides with the party's affirmative action position or plans to the effect that the party would pay monthly allowances to all single mothers.

On his part, the General Secretary of the GCPP surmised that since politics is a career, there is the need for training especially at the grassroots level because politics is about performance. This would be enhanced if there were structures to address the challenges women encounter.

For the GCPP, the challenges many women political aspirants encounter are mainly financial because of the huge financial demands of politics in Ghana. In addition, the party notes that most husbands would not allow their wives (as part of the general traditional trappings) into what they consider to be 'dirty' politics. Furthermore, the checkered democratic history of Ghana, cumulatively, do not make politics an interesting option for women, some of whom are still skeptical about the future of democracy in Ghana. One means of addressing these challenges is through public education on the need to get more women into politics and public positions and the benefits of a consolidated democracy.

### **2.5.5 The Convention People's Party (CPP)**

The CPP is credited with creating opportunities for women to participate in politics. This has however not grown with the years of democracy since Ghana embraced Samuel Huntington's "third wave" democracy<sup>3</sup>. In other words there has not been any significant improvement in the gender composition of party positions within the party since 1992. Nonetheless, from the National Women's Deputy Organizer, there is some light at the end of the tunnel because of unfolding events. For instance, a woman contested and won the position of the First Vice Chairmanship and more women continue to exhibit keen interest in parliamentary positions and other hitherto 'male reserved positions' like the vice chairmanship. In addition, although it is very rare for a woman to contest for key positions at the regional level and win, this entrenched position changed when in Brong Ahafo, the position of regional secretary was won by a woman.

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Huntington's "Third Wave Democracy" refers to the reemergence of democratic system of government during the late 1980s. This has spread through out many developing countries in Africa, Latin America, South America and some countries of the former communist countries.

The National Women's Deputy Organizer stated that politically women are often used as tools to achieve targeted aims since it appears easier for women to engage in that. The CPP's institutional mechanism has a committee, which is charged with the responsibility of visiting tertiary institutions to sensitize and educate young women on the need to get involved in politics and impact the process positively. The inauguration of the University of Ghana, Legon branch of Tertiary Chapter of the CPP (TESCHART), did not however bear witness to the effectiveness of the committee's work since there was only one woman among them (Ghanaian Times, April 17, 2004: 10).

Thus, in a nutshell, all political parties in our study expressed their support for women's role in the political process and acknowledge the significance of this. Such expressions or support is not however congruent with actual practice because of the disconnect between intentions and actions.

The above implies that, the relatively well-organized and consolidated political parties have a major responsibility to ensure that gender issues in general and women's concerns in particular both within and without the party are seen and worked at as an equally important component of the party system and structure. We argue here that political parties, which do not have a comprehensive gender or affirmative action policy with focused attention on women matters and concerns, may not be considered as democratic institutions. This is premised on the fact made clear by Galoy (1998:19), and Nelson and Chowdhury (1994:18) that women's participation in politics creates a congenial atmosphere needed to humanize gender relations in politics and that democracy without (reasonable number of) women is not democracy.

Extending the argument, Karam opines that the challenge goes beyond ensuring the election of large numbers of women into the legislature. The significance of ensuring large numbers of women is not just to increase the percentage but also to ensure that they will correspond to an increase in the force they bring to bear on parliamentary decision-making especially on policies that affect women and children, in order to eliminate discriminatory policies at all levels (Karam, 1998:11).

## **2.6 Gender Composition of Parliamentary Select Committee and Standing Committee**

In view of this, the study looks at the composition of women on the different parliamentary standing and select committees and the leadership structure of the legislature in Tables 6 and 7 respectively.

**Table 6:** Membership of Select Committee by Gender

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Men % of Total</b>		<b>Women % of Total</b>		<b>Total</b>
Lands and Forestry	17	94%	1	6%	18
Agric, Food and Cocoa	15	75%	5	25%	20
Local Gov't and R. Dev't	17	85%	3	15%	20
Works and Housing	17	94%	1	6%	18
Const'l, Legal and Parl. Affairs.	18	100%	0	0%	18
Health	17	85%	3	15%	20
Communication	15	83%	3	17%	20
Roads and Transport	17	94%	1	6%	18
Defence and Interior	17	94%	1	6%	18
Foreign Affairs	17	85%	3	15%	20
Youth, Sports and Culture	17	94%	1	6%	18
Education	18	95%	1	5%	19
Mines and Energy	16	89%	2	11%	18
Environment, Science, Technology	17	94%	1	6%	18
Employment, Social Welfare and State Enterprises	18	90%	2	10%	20
Trade, Ind. and Tourism	19	95%	1	5%	20

**Source:** Adapted from The First Meeting of the Second Session of the Third Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, February, 2002, Compiled by the Research Department of Parliament.

The composition of the select committee as depicted in Table 6 gives ample support to the need for increasing the number of women, which appears only like a drop in the ocean. More critically, men occupy the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship positions of all the committees. The highest leadership position of a woman is a ranking member by Hon. (Mrs) Ama Benyiwa Doe of the Employment, Social Welfare and State Enterprises.

The situation is not different with the fourteen (14) Standing Committees. For the leadership positions, it is only the positions of the Gender and Children Committees, which are, not surprisingly, occupied by women.

**Table 7:** Membership of Standing Committee by Gender

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Men % of Total</b>		<b>Women % of Total</b>		<b>Total</b>
Government Assurances	23	92%	2	8%	25
Business	17	85%	3	15%	20
Appointments	24	92%	2	8%	26
Finance	23	92%	2	8%	25
Public Accounts	24	96%	1	4%	25
Selection	18	90%	2	10%	20
Subsidiary Legislation	23	100%	0	0%	23
House	22	85%	4	15%	26
Mbrs Holding Offices of Profit	22	88%	3	12%	25
Privileges	30	97%	1	3%	31
Gender and Children	18	75%	6	25%	24
Judiciary	18	86%	3	14%	21
Special Budget	19	90%	3	10%	21
Standing Orders	23	100%	0	0%	23

**Source:** Adapted from First Meeting of the Second Session of the Third Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, February 2002, Research Department of Parliament.

Whilst some of the committees like Standing Orders and Subsidiary Legislation did not have any women membership, the Gender and Children's Committee had 25% women membership, the highest percentage of women membership.

The above gender consideration puts onerous duty on political parties to ensure that more women get elected as MPs in order to change these socio-politically unacceptable disparities of the gendered structure of the parliamentary committees. There is no way this can change unless parties, which are the major channels for legislative representation, act with consistency and commitment supported by sustained advocacy by CSOs championing the cause of gender mainstreaming and equity. Along the conundrum of women in politics is their role within the local government system.

## **2.7 Women and Local Government In Ghana**

The local government system in Ghana is central to government's efforts at developing the country and balancing the administrative machinery. The 1992 Republican Constitution created the framework within which intergovernmental relationships, functions and sources of funding including the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) and its administration were mapped out (*Zanu: 1996*). The current system is premised on the element of participatory democracy.

In 1988, the then ruling government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government, embarked on an ambitious overhaul of the existing local government system. These changes were quite far-reaching and affected not only the conceptual basis but also the practice of decentralization in the country. For women, these changes were considered critical because of the element of flexibility embedded in the new system including its non-partisan nature and the argument that local government administration offers better opportunities for women to participate in politics.

The decentralization policy and the legal framework makes the District Assemblies (DAs) the highest political, administrative, legislative and deliberative organ at the district level and are therefore charged with the onerous duty of ensuring development in an atmosphere of peace in their

respective jurisdictions. The system is made up of a four-tier (3) metropolitan and three-tier (4) municipal/ 103 DAs. Each of these is constituted by seventy (70) percent elected and thirty (30) percent nominated members, presided over by a Presiding Member (PM) with an overall administrative Chief Executive, appropriately called Metropolitan, Municipal or District Chief Executive (MCE or DCE). These are supported by the work of sub-committees (ibid).

The elected positions are keenly contested for, though without the political party furore characteristic of general elections because the system is (controversially) non-partisan. It is within the elected positions that women's performance would be analyzed subsequently. As part of the efforts to engender institutions, some DAs created Women in Development sub-committees. Where assemblies could not elect adequate number of women, the government through the nomination of women as government appointees shored up their number (Brown, Ghartey and Ekuma: 1996).

Since 1988, the performance of women in politics at the local level has recorded some steady but slow progress of not only the number of women contestants but also those who actually win. We may note however, that these numbers though not at appreciable levels, offers some modicum of hope to women's political participation at the local level and a shadow of what is to take place at the national level as more women get in and gain required and necessary experience.

Brown, Ghartey and Ekuma sought to bring the situation of women in the local government system to the public domain through an examination of women's participation in local government. Their study also sought to analyze the factors that affected the extent of women's participation and design appropriate strategies for the enhancement of women's political rights. Since then, there have been integrated studies on women in public life generally with portions on the performance of women in local government administration.

Brown et al reiterated that women's political participation has a link with the effectiveness of their political activities and their ability to impact local political establishments on the communities, give direction through their involvement in policy and decision making (Ibid: 21). The study stated

views from respondents about women’s participation in politics. Notably, some of the respondents on one hand, believed that women were ineffective in politics; that women should not have political interaction with men and should remain home makers and that women were not firm in taking decisions and implementing policies. On the other hand, there was another set of respondents who opined that women could function as a unifying force in local politics with a third affirming the need for the empowerment of women in spite of the traditional setting and cultural demands (Ibid: 22).

Interestingly, results of surveys conducted by the Department of Political Science of the University of Ghana, Legon had strong indication that there is a shift towards the perception of women participation in politics, not only as a unifying force but also as part of the nurturing democratic culture needed to humanize democracy and subsequently consolidate it.

The 2002 district level elections offer some interesting results on these issues. Asked whether respondents would readily vote for a woman generally considered as capable, an overwhelming majority of 86% of 1761 respondents were more ready to vote for a woman who is adjudged capable to perform. Table 8 below shows details of results of the responses.

**Table 8:** Readiness to vote for a woman generally considered Capable

**Question:**

**Would you vote for a woman generally considered capable to represent you in the DA?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1518	85.4	86.2	86.2.
	No	243	13.7	13.8	100.0
	Total	1761	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System				
	Missing	16	.9		
	Total	16	.9		
<b>Total</b>		<b>1777</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

**Source:** Dept. of Political Science, 2002 District Level Elections Survey Data

The dilemma here is that many of those who expressed the desire to vote for a woman candidate did not have the chance to prove their commitment to this position because in most of the electoral areas, there were no women candidates. This was closely followed up with a question on how the public perceived the capacity and capabilities of men and women. Table 9 showcases the responses.

**Table 9:** Society's Perception on the capacity of men and women in the Political Arena

**Question:** Do you think that women are as equally capable as men in political leadership roles?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	1222	68.8	69.5	69.5
No	356	20.0	20.2	89.7
Don't know	181	10.2	10.3	100.0
Total	1759	99.0	100.0	
Missing System				
Missing	18	1.0		
Total	18	1.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

**Source:** Dept. of Political Science 2002 District Level Survey Data

The above information testifies to respondents' (69.5%) certainty that women are equally capable of taking leadership roles or positions just as men. In a similar vein, respondents were optimistic that women have equal chances of getting elected as assemblywomen as depicted in Table 9 below. 54.8% of respondents expressed this view whilst 34.6 % were of contrary perspective.

Those who felt that women had equal chance as men had reasons adduced for their views. For them, provided the woman can do the job, they would give her the needed support. These sentiments have been translated into some level of action but not to a very appreciable level. Since 1994, the number of women contestants at the district level has witnessed some modest increases as shown in the table 10 below.

**Table 10:** Number of Women Contestants and Winners

<b>Year</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>
No. of Women Contestants	348	580	981
No. Elected	94	199	368
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>38%</b>

**Source:** Adapted from Allah-Mensah, 2003, p.149. (Original Source Electoral Commission)

As much as one may want to be skeptical because of the very minimal increases in the actuals, it is important to note that, because of the checkered history of democratic politics in Ghana, there is need to be hopeful especially as the number of women who express interests in politics at both the national and local levels keeps increasing election after election. With education, commitment and determination and the output of those already occupying key positions in the political set up, there would be some corresponding increase in the number of successful women. This is also linked to, and partly dependent on, the strength of women in public institutions including parliament and responsible for policy formulation and implementation.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The chapter has tried to bring out the state of women in politics from the party level through to national politics and substantiated by women's role and status in local government. It is undisputed that there have been significant progress of women in some of the areas which must be commended. Yet, the blurred picture created of numbers and subsequently impact on policy as the basis for furthering the course of women and children in Ghana needs brightening up. It was observed that, majority of efforts depend on the active, realistic and committed support by political parties. Policy making is the road map for a nation's development agenda and program. For this reason whoever is a member of the policy community has power to determine how policy decision impacts different social groups, redirect individual and group life and enforce social, political and economic values necessary for sustained development.

# CHAPTER THREE:

## WOMEN IN PUBLIC OFFICES AND INSTITUTIONS

### 3.1 Introduction

The role or position of women in public offices has become necessary because in the examination of public policy making and its outcomes, the gendered character of the state becomes an important focus. This is against the backdrop that, although there is evidence of women employed in state institutions, very few are found at the apex of the system. The gendered state bureaucracy goes beyond representative bureaucracy (a theory that states that the bureaucracy should be representative of all key social groups who would be representatives of their large membership to ensure that policies formulated are in their members' interests) and encompasses "the embedded masculine style and organization of state bureaucracies" (Waylen 1996: 12-13.) The above, underlie the kernel of this chapter.

This section attempts to assess the capacity of women in public offices using some public institutions as case studies. The public institutions are some constitutionally mandated institution and some public boards. Our analysis will focus on the number of women as percentage of total staff strength and the positions they hold where available and the implications of these for women's role in public administration. These would be complemented by responses from key informant interviews on crucial issues on the challenges women face in scaling up the career stepladder and how to address them. The insight gained from the analysis serve as the basis for political campaign strategies and subsequently for policy consideration.

These institutions consist the constitutional created ones and public boards. These include the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Electoral Commission (EC), National Media Commission (NMC), Parliament, the Lands Commission (LC) and the Forestry Commission (FC). Others are the Judiciary and the Police Service.

## **3.2 Women's Representation in Constitutionally Created Institutions and Public Boards**

The 1992 Republican Constitution explicitly states the equality of citizens in all endeavour of social, economic and political life. Constitutionally, therefore, there is equal opportunity for all who qualify irrespective of gender. In practice however, the situation is different and far from any form of equality of representation in government bureaucracy. In Ghana, there is a general perception that majority of women employed in government set ups especially the Ministries are heavily tilted and located at the very base of the administrative hierarchy. As a verification of this popularly held view, the study extended to ascertain the actual situation.

### **3.2.1 The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)**

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is the government organ responsible for ensuring awareness and understanding of civic duties and responsibilities as enshrined in the 1992 Republican constitution. This would assist the citizenry, the government and its institutions and collaborators in civil society to ensure commitment to the ideals in the constitution and their operationalization. Their role is not only constitutionally required but strategic in terms of information packaging and dissemination.

The NCCE board membership is made up of a chairman, two deputy chairpersons, and three members. Out of the six members, three are women, who are deputy chair for Finance and Administration (F&A) and deputy chair for Programs and one member respectively. This gives some assurance that issues in the constitution on women in particular and equality in general would attract the attention of the Commission. The staff strength at the regional level is seventy-five (75) with twenty-four (24) being women, with the director and her deputy all being women. For some officials of the NCCE, women in public offices are doing well because of higher educational qualification. In addition, with the creation of the Women's Ministry by the NPP government, the agenda for women's participation in public life and the general economy is gradually being crafted. Nonetheless, one official opined that although article 28 of the 1992 Constitution have something on

the rights of women, that position is inadequate and shallow and that an act on women's right like the one on Children's Rights could contribute a lot in achieving something substantial for women and the cause they stand for<sup>4</sup>.

The Deputy Greater Accra Regional Director confirmed the statements made by one of the Assistant Civic Education Officers. To her, no institution is problem free and although the NCCE may not exhibit higher levels of gender discrimination or sexual harassment among others, she could not simply deny their existence. But, all that notwithstanding, she was of the view that with the right type of information, women who experience these could address them in the right way and through the proper channels. The Greater Accra Regional Director admitted she has the needed support from her male colleagues and there has not been any reported case of gender discrimination that she was aware of.

Furthermore, in her opinion, since there was no law barring women from attaining higher positions in the public offices, women could get to these top positions if they have the required educational qualification. The importance of education was once again emphasized by the deputy director. Nonetheless, and perhaps a bit surprisingly, she expressed the view that women cannot occupy top positions she termed 'sensitive'.

Thus, from the above, the general situation is that, there is goodwill in the NCCE to ensure that women attain top positions in public offices but need the required education and other relevant background experience and that for the NCCE, they are more open to women and gender issues because women are the largest of their constituency by population size.

### **3.2.2 The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)**

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) aims at promoting good governance, democracy, integrity, peace and social development. This is effected through the promotion, protection and enforcement of fundamental human rights and freedoms and administrative justice for all persons in Ghana. The achievement of the above is premised

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<sup>4</sup> Information from interview with one of the Assistant Civic Education Officers.

on ensuring mutual respect; promoting justice expeditiously; ensuring fairness, transparency and application of best practices through a well-trained and motivated workforce and the application of modern technology. Underlying all these is the committed, impartial, independent manner of achieving its set aims through civil society and other institutional collaboration (CHRAJ 2002 Annual Report:4).

On women, officials of CHRAJ, both men and women were of the view that, their institution is placed in a more challenging position regarding women/gender issues because it is a human rights institution which aims at addressing human rights abuses among others. Consequently, it should be championing this course through leadership by example. In view of this, the Commission has a very strong and effective equal opportunities policy and other policies that ensure that women are given some leverage because of their domestic commitments. For instance, nursing mothers are granted permission to close two hours early than all other workers so that they can attend to their children (ibid).

It states in its Staff Policy and Human Resource Handbook, “the Commission is an equal opportunities employer” (Staff Policy and Human Resource Handbook: 43) For the commission, equal opportunity has a lot of inherent worth that cumulatively contributes to high performance. For instance, according to the Commission, when equal opportunity is not applied a lot of valuable source of talents and potentials are wasted whilst its application leads to the utilization of full potential and consequently, increased productivity.

CHRAJ was the first institution to pronounce its stance against sexual harassment and upholds equal opportunities for men and women to enable all have equal chances of upgrading and enhancing their resource for capacity building. The institution’s concern for women’s participation in politics prompted it to issue a circular during the 2002 district assembly elections on the need for affirmative action to be given real meaning during the district level elections and not to be seen as mere tokenism.

In addition to these, most of the programmes organized by CHRAJ had a big focus on women’s rights on interstate succession law, family law, maternal mobility and mortality, women and nation-building, violence against

women including rape and defilement and early and forced marriages. Others include female genital mutilation, inhuman widowhood rites among others, often organized in collaboration with other women's groups (Annual Report 2002:17-29). These programmes were reflective of the Commission's declared position on women's under-representation.

**Box 1: CHRAJ's Position on Women**

*"The Commission remains gravely concerned about the continued gender inequalities in Ghanaian society and the fact that women are under-represented in decision-making positions. Women constitute 51% of the Ghanaian population and they contribute immensely to the overall social and economic growth and development of the country. Yet, women in Ghanaian society are confronted with socio-cultural and attitudinal barriers that impede their advancement and their equitable participation in national development". It noted "with satisfaction the active involvement and efforts of Ghanaian women to participate in the district level elections held this year. Such efforts deserve the commendation and support of everyone. Participation in local government offers women opportunities to contribute to national development and to effectively represent their communities.*

**Source:** 2002 Annual Report, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

Table 11 below gives the staff strength of CHRAJ by gender.

**Table 11:** National Staff Strength of CHRAJ by Gender and Level

Level	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Senior Level	175	47	222
% of Total	23%	6%	29%
Junior Level	394	157	551
% of Total	51%	20%	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>773</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Adapted from CHRAJ, 2002

Perhaps the Commission may not be blamed for this skewed gender work force because, its recruitment and employment decisions are based on fair and objective criteria and avoidance of unlawful discrimination. In other words, there is no deliberate attempt to employ more men than women (Staff Policy and Human Resource Handbook *ibid*).

In addition, in spite of the participation of women in politics alluded to above and the commitment of CHRAJ to ensure equality in all spheres, there are a number of challenges that confront women. One of these is the juggling of formal work with domestic/family responsibilities, lack of assertiveness and self- confidence; violence and sometimes lack of support from male colleagues or husbands. However, within CHRAJ, female officials were unanimous that, their male colleagues give them all the support and there is mutual respect for each other's work, contribution and perspectives. This is very reassuring for the enhancement of women's contribution to the development and functioning of Ghana's administrative apparatus.

### 3.2.3 The Electoral Commission (EC)

The Electoral Commission (EC) is the only institution responsible for the holding of elections in Ghana. Among its functions is the compilation, revision and expansion of voters register, demarcation of electoral boundaries for national and local elections. Others include educating people on electoral processes and purposes, conduct and supervising all public elections and referenda and performing any other such functions as may be prescribed by law (Article 45 sections a-f, 1992 Republican Constitution: 44). In carrying out these functions, the EC would be managed by a board of seven (7) members constituted as the Chairman, two Deputy Chairmen responsible for Finance and Operations and four other members. (See Appendix II d for membership of the Board).

Out of total national staff strength of one thousand, two hundred and fifty-two (1252) only two hundred and ninety eight (298) which is a paltry 24% are women. Of this number, only ten (10), which is a pathetic 3%, are in senior management level. (See Table 12).

**Table 12:** Number of Women in Senior Positions in the Electoral Commission

<b>Position/Grade</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>
Director	1
Senior Electoral Officers	3
Senior Public Relations Officer	1
Electoral Officer	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

**Source:** Adapted from Interviews

The Electoral Commission does not have an official policy on affirmative action. This is very different from the CHRAJ. It could be due to the absence of an affirmative action and an equal opportunities policy that led to the complaints by officials (both men and women) about the encounters of women in the EC. There is the general contention that women in EC are sidelined and frustrated by the men and that discourages the women and

retards their progress. They affirm that though there has been a women's desk in the EC for over ten (10) years, nothing has changed with regard to women's role in the institution. As a result of the frustration and challenges that the women face, a new leadership is making frantic efforts to change the status quo and grant women the needed opportunities for enhanced productivity and self-improvement.

The scenario in the EC calls for some attention because of the important role the EC plays in our electoral and democratic processes as described above. If it is not gender sensitive to its own staff, it may be quite challenging for it to be gender-focused in its activities to ensure the removal of barriers to women's full participation in the electoral and democratic processes.

It must however be mentioned, that the EC, in collaboration with other institutions of civil society like FES and FIDA have organized programmes aimed at sensitizing political parties, women and the general public on the importance of women's role in the democratic process. Such programmes may be easily construed as merely satisfying pressure brought to bear on the Commission by women's groups or civil society. But pragmatically, these programmes should be seen as a wider dimension of their constitutional mandate to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections with credibility at all levels and for all groups. Such commitment should infiltrate into the organizational structure of the EC. It is significant for the staff to become acquainted with gender issues and become practically sensitized on women concerns as far as the electoral and democratic process is concerned in order to contribute to its promotion through their daily activities and interactions.

### **3.2.4 The National Media Commission (NMC)**

The National Media Commission (NMC) has the mandate to promote free, independent and responsible media in order to sustain democracy and national development. Among others, the NMC is to promote and ensure the freedom and independence of the media, (especially state-owned), registration of newspapers and high journalistic standards.

Out of a total of eighteen (18) commissioners, 4, which is about 22%, are women. This is not too surprising because, in the 24-page National Media Commission Profile, apart from the mentioning of the National Commission on Women and Development (NCWD), there is no reference to any thing on women. That does not, though necessarily mean that NMC is not gender sensitive.

However, there are many more issues it could flag as part of its agenda and organizational structure to give prominence to gender concerns. In the organizational structure itself, out of a total staff strength of nineteen (19) only five (5) are women none of whom is at the management level.

There is no doubt that the gender stratification of the staff strength and the Board of the NMC is very skewed in favour of men. However, it would not be fair to push the blame on the NMC since it has no policy on recruitment of a particular gender for its work.

One of our key informants from NMC recognized the efforts by government and civil society organizations to encourage women to participate in the political and administrative processes of the country, but was quick to add that women encounter a number of challenges. These challenges include the character of politics in Ghana which many term as 'dirty' as a result of which many women tend to shy away because they cannot stand the apparent abusive, character-assassination kind of politics. In addition, although some avenues are opened up for women, they hardly take up the challenge to contest and those who have been elected are not visible in their contribution to the process of policy formulation. There are also financial constraints for most women who would otherwise be interested in politics. According to her, men generally look down on women, which is an offspring of existing tradition and custom, though some are very supportive. For her, one way to deal with this is for women to get more education and other forms of training to a higher level to make them assertive and confident in their endeavours.

### **3.2.5 The Judiciary**

The Judiciary is no doubt, one of the strong institutions of democratic governance. As a government body, it works under its assigned legal stipulations for performance. The issue of gender in general and the position or role of women in particular in the Judiciary is not significantly different from the general trend in other government institutions. There are more men in policy strategic positions than there are women. Table13 below shows the gender stratification of some of the positions in the Judiciary.

**Table 13: Gender Stratification of Positions in the Judiciary**

Position	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
Supreme Court	10	3	13
% of Total	77%	23%	100%
Appeal Court	21	4	25
% of Total	84%	16%	100%
High Court	53	12	65
% of Total	82%	18%	100%
Regional Tribunals	2	0	2
% of Totals	100%	0	100%
Circuit Court	58	3	61
% of Totals	95%	5%	100%
District Magistrate	58	11	69
% of Totals	84%	16%	100%
Chief Registrar	4	2	6
% of Totals	67%	33%	100%
Deputy Registrar	7	8	15
% of Totals	47%	53%	100%
Sen. Records Registrar	12	8	20
% of Total	60%	40%	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>% of Grand Total</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Extracted From Interview with Judicial Secretary

Table 13 above confirms the low representation of women in key and strategic positions in Ghana's bureaucratic structure exemplified by the case in the Judiciary above. From the Supreme Court to the District Magistrate, the percentage of women did not go beyond 23%. Out of a total number of 276 people occupying these positions, only 18% of them are women with the highest representation being in the Deputy Registrar's office and incidentally the only office where women outnumbered men in the sample. This sounds like a discrimination against women. However, one of the Chief Registrars has a contrary view.

For him, the only avenue one might think of such discrimination is in granting of financial assistance to the workers and not with positions. The men, according to him, tend to receive such financial assistance more often and quickly than their women counterparts who would have to make several appeals over a long period. The reasons adduced for this is that, women have their husbands (assuming that all female workers are married or should be married) to support them in case of extreme financial difficulties whilst the men do not, as it were, have any other alternative. In addition, whilst there have been some few cases of reported sexual harassment, such problems are hardly publicized. In few reported cases, the men who have been found culpable are transferred.

In spite of all these, our key informant was of the view that the future is bright for women who aspire to political offices because of the liberal political environment that do not put any restriction on qualified people and gender. Suggestion from him was for women to acquire the necessary education and qualification that would help catapult them to those positions they aspire to.

### **3.2.6 Parliament**

The women parliamentary support staff was categorical that there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender or any other variable and that their male colleagues give them the needed support to make them as productive as is expected of them. This is against the backdrop that there is no known affirmative action as the basis for these actions by all workers. This does not mean however that, the gender stratification of Parliamentary staff is very different from other state organizations. The offices in the service

are as follows: the Clerk to Parliament; Deputy Clerks; Information; Publication and Research Division consisting of the department of official report, research department, information, communication and technology department; Library, Public Affairs; Finance, Human Resource and General Administration Division, consisting of department of administration, human resource department, development office, finance department, audit department and marshal's department. Whilst there are women in all these departments, the concentration is heaviest in the Department of Administration. For a graphic representation and corresponding percentages, see Table 14.

**Table 14:** Gender Stratification of Staff/Officers of the Parliamentary Service

Department/Office	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
Clerk to Parliament	1	0	1
% of Total	100%	0	100%
Deputy Clerk to Parliament	2	0	2
% of Total	100%	0	100%
Legislative Mgt Division	17	10	27
% of Total	63%	37%	100%
Dep't of Official Reporting	14	10	24
% of Total	58%	42%	100%
Research Department	5	5	10
% of Total	50%	50%	100
Info., Comm. & Tech Dep't	1	3	4
% of Total	25%	75%	100%
Library Department	2	3	5
% of Total	40%	60%	100%
Dep't of Administration	7	21	28
%of Total	25%	75%	100%
Development office	3	0	3
% of Total	100	0	100%
Finance Department	6	3	9
% of Total	67%	33%	100%
Marshals Department	14	3	17
% of Total	82%	18%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Extracted from “ Ceremonial Opening of the Fourth Session of the Third Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, pp.16-23.

The Parliamentary service depicts a better picture of the number of women in the various departments. But a careful perusal indicates the highest percentage of women in the Department of Administration. Here, out of 17 Senior Private Secretaries, Private Secretaries and Stenographer Secretaries, only two are men whilst there are two women out of five Senior Executive Officers. Interestingly, the Director of Administration is a woman. This is one of the very mixed make up of officials by gender in the public sector.

The Director of Administration explained that there are no rules aimed at ensuring gender balance, which is not too good since most of the women in the service are nearing their retirement age. Although it appeared the issue of gender was not a real one, the practical picture is quite different. For some of our respondents, some women have been discriminated against and have not been supported to get to higher positions using the lack of certain education qualification like being a degree holder as the basis for disqualification or discrimination. This makes competition very keen and necessitating extra efforts on the part of women. A comment made by one female director is worth considering.

**Box 2: Comment by a Woman Director**

*Women have to work four times more for their efforts to be recognized. Once a woman is working the least that can be done is to recognize her. Again, if a woman qualifies for a particular position, she should be considered and not to be careful with offering the position just because she is a woman. Men in authority should not think for women by saying that if offered the position, she would not be able to do it. Give the woman a chance and she will perform creditably.*

**Source:** Interview with Director of Administration, Parliamentary Service, 16 March 2004.

Giving some suggestion, she noted that although some women are supportive of their women colleagues, there is the need to address traditional and cultural restraints. There is also the need for a balance between the multiple roles of women in order to engender the necessary support from men in general and husbands in particular. Consideration should also be

given to women who are also handicapped because such women encounter dual challenges. These ought not be restraining factors.

She was also hopeful that since women have come a long way with respect to their interests in politics, there is light at the end of the tunnel and that the exemplary show of women in the 2002 district level elections should encourage all to put their hands onto the wheel. Her concern was that if government sticks to its word on helping women in every area of their lives to acquire the needed skills, finance or credit facilities, women can reach the pinnacle of the political and public positions and contribute substantially and effectively to the development of the country. Education, according to her, is very fundamental to all these efforts.

Supporting the above, an official at the Department of Official Reporting commented that, it is high time the old mentality about women not being leaders is discarded since this frustrates and discourages women from attaining greater heights. She however surmised that, the nature of Ghanaian politics has discouraged women from getting involved. Civil society, the government and even women in parliament and their parties should all help to change this so that more women would be attracted to it.

### **3.3 Gender Stratification of Membership of Public Boards**

Among the public boards to be considered are the National Media Commission (NMC), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Electoral Commission (EC), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Lands Commission (LC) and the Forestry Commission (FC). In all, there is a total of 64 members. Out of this, 13 are women, which represents only 24% of the total membership. The representation of women on public boards has a constitutional requirement. See Table 15 for some details and appendix II a-f for the names of the members of the various boards.

**Table 15:** Gender Stratification of Membership of Public Board

Public Board	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
National Media Commission	14	4	18
% of Total	78%	22%	100%
N. C. C. E	3	3	6
% of Total	50%	50%	100%
Electoral Commission	4	3	7
% of Total	57%	43%	100%
C H R A J	3	2	5
% of Total	60%	40%	100%
Forestry Commission	8	1	9
% of Total	89%	11%	100%
Lands Commission	19	0	19
% of Total	100%	0	100%
<b>T O T A L</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Research Directorate, Ministry of Information, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

The membership of the public boards also depicts the state of women's role in public offices. Apart from the NCCE, which has a 50% representation, all the others had between 43% and 11%, which are very low, with no woman representation on the Lands Commission. This is a blatant violation of the constitutional requirement, which states, "the state shall take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices" (Article 35, section 6 (b): 36). Thus,

even in appointive positions the required gender balance has not been achieved, a situation that raises a lot of questions on the commitment of government to the concerns of women.

Land is the fulcrum around which many Ghanaian livelihoods revolve and particularly strategic for women because they constitute 52% of the agriculture labour force and account for 70% and 90% of subsistence crops and marketing of farm produce respectively (Senuvi 2004: 5). In spite of the strategic importance of land to women's economic activities, Duncan notes that although women have not played key roles in the acquisition of land, it is not a reflection of their use of this factor of production (Duncan 2004:63-65). In other words, though land acquisition has been a traditionally male issue, its use is more gendered. It is for this reason that, NGOs like the Network for Women's Rights and Abantu have continuously championed and challenged efforts at land reform that give little consideration to women's role or interests including the composition of the Lands Commission which has no women membership (Senuvi, *ibid*).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The chapter has indicated that, in spite of constitutional provisions for some gender balance in representation on boards and commissions, this has largely not been achieved with different implications for influencing policy decisions. It is significant that governments adhere strictly to such provisions and make extra effort to ensure that women are adequately represented in order to bring n board their perspectives on issues of concern to these public institutions and boards.

# **CHAPTER FOUR:**

## **WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC BUREAUCRACY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on women in the public bureaucracy, specifically the ministries. The selected ministries are nine. These are the Ministries of Women's and Children's Affairs, Information, Communication, Employment and Manpower Development, Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City, Interior, Environment and Science, Works and Housing and Education, Youth and Sports.

The survey indicated that the ministries do not represent a different scenario as most of the women working in these institutions are found mostly at lower levels of the hierarchical structure with very few women occupying key managerial or directorate positions. The study ascertains this by examining scenarios in some selected ministries including the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The chapter attempts to examine the role and positions of women from the ministries by beginning with the gender stratification of ministers, deputy ministers, cabinet and non-cabinet ministers. (See Table 16).

## 4.2 Gender Stratification of Ministerial Positions

**Table 16:** Gender Stratification of Ministerial Positions

Office	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
Cabinet Ministers	17	2	19
% of Total	89%	11%	100%
Non-Cabinet Ministers	7	0	7
% of Total	100%	0	100%
Ministers of State	5	2	7
% of Total	71%	29%	100%
Deputy Ministers of State	27	6	33
% of Totals	82%	18%	100%
Regional Ministers	10	0	10
% of Totals	100%	0	100%
Dep. Regional Ministers	9	1	10
% of Total	90%	10%	100
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>% of Grand Total</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Ceremonial Opening of the Fourth Session of the Third Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, January 20<sup>th</sup> 2004, pp. 11-15.

The representation in Table 16 depicts a rather dismal picture of women in the government structure. In fact, a careful scrutiny would reveal that there has been a decline in the number of women in governmental positions since 2001. Harrison notes the number of women in government ministeri-

al positions had increased from one (1) in 1980 to seven (7) in 2000. In 2004, there are no women regional ministers for instance whilst there were three (3) women regional ministers in the NDC government in 2000. But, the number of deputy ministers also increased in 2004 to six (6) from three (3) in 2000 (Harrison 2004: 228 and Table 16).

### **4.3 Women in the Ministries**

#### **4.3.1 The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC)**

The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) was established by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to promote the welfare of and addresses challenges encountered by women and children in Ghana. According to its mission statement, it is the body, which has the mandate to initiate, coordinate and monitor gender responsive concerns. These would be promoted through the formulation of gender and child specific development policies, guidelines, advocacy tools, strategies and plans for implementation by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Other implementing agencies include the District Assemblies (DAs), Private Sector Agencies, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Development Partners (DP). The Ministry also has the mandate to monitor and evaluate programmes and policies and to ensure that women and children become critical beneficiaries of all development plans and programmes (MOWAC News Bulletin 2003: 4).

As the ministry responsible for women affairs, MOWAC has developed a gender policy, which has been put before parliament for consideration. It is also spearheading the Domestic Violence Bill in a less provocative and confrontational manner. The ministry's position on the Domestic Violence bill is that, as a nation, we have not reached the era of individualism bearing in mind the fact that there are no safety mechanisms or nets that mitigate marital problems and their effects on especially women and children.

In addition, MOWAC has been very supportive of the activities of Gender Desk Officers (GDOs) as a means to mainstream gender issues into policy formulation. The first GDO strategy formulation workshop was therefore organized by the ministry to clarify their roles, properly equip them to enable effective performance of their assigned roles (MOWAC News

Bulletin, *ibid*). On the promotion of women into decision-making positions, the ministry states that as one of its key priority concerns which is being addressed.

As part of this, the Women's Department organizes a women's monthly forum for women's groups, GDOs and individuals as the starting point for policy formulation processes and platform for dissemination of information on women. Some other activities that the department has been involved in as a follow up to its commitment to involving women include collaboration with institutions like the NCCE, MDAs and other NGOs. In addition, it organized a forum to sensitize women on the National Policy on Information Communication Technology (ICT) considering the important role women play in societal development (MoWAC News Bulletin *ibid*: 8-9). Thus, the MOWAC, is putting in place some mechanisms and structures to ensure the participation of women in the development and policy making processes. This is all in spite of the criticism leveled against the ministry by some political parties like the People's National Convention (PNC) and the Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP)<sup>5</sup>.

Though, there is no organizational affirmative action, some female staff noted cooperation between both men and women except a few of the men who are insubordinate because they do not want to take instructions from women because of their gender and because of the fact that those men have been in the service longer than the women they are expected to work with. Contributing to the discourse on women in politics, one of our key informants commented that the political atmosphere should be made conducive for women aspirants to political offices. (See Box 3 for her comments).

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<sup>5</sup> This came out during the interviewing section of the CPP and GCPP. See chapter three for details.

### **Box 3: Comments by Staff of MOWAC**

*The women in parliament are bold and determined because our environment is not conducive. Politics has been reduced to 'politics of insults'. We continue to educate men to be more gender sensitive to the needs of women because our needs are different and the men should take time to understand them. I am yet to see a pregnant woman in Parliament. Much as we expect more women in Parliament, we should also make the effort to make provisions for them to be able to perform well. The 19 women in Parliament is very small and it makes it difficult to carry out affirmative action at the different levels. Diversity of people makes room for diversity of ideas, which brings variety, so the number of women in Parliament should go up to make for this important diversity.*

**Source:** Interview with Staff of MOWAC, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

In addition, she felt that the future holds a lot of prospects for women and their participation because of the advocacy role of the Ministry through its numerous activities.

#### **4.3.2 The Ministry of Information**

The Ministry operates on the principles within the civil service and aims at making relevant and unclassified information available to the general public for their proper use to enhance development activities. In the view of the Chief Records Officer, all workers are given the same opportunities to upgrade themselves and that some of the women have benefited from study leave. For him, there is no discrimination and no known job-related problems for the women just because of their gender. The general problem however, is the inadequate salary levels. However, some of the women have domestic problems that might affect their performance on the job, and that should be addressed by the appropriate institutions. He however admits that, the number of women in the ministry is still very small (See Table 17).

**Table 17: Gender Stratification of Some Positions in the Ministry**

Position/Grades	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
Deputy Directors	13	4	17
% of Total	76%	24%	100%
Assistant Directors	30	6	36
% of Total	83%	17%	100%
Principal Information Officer	5	3	8
% of Total	63%	37%	100%
Senior Information Officer	11	1	12
% of Total	92%	8%	100%
Information Officer	11	2	13
% of Total	85%	15%	100%
Secretaries	1	20	21
% of Total	5%	95%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** From Interview, Chief Records Supervisor, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

The Table reflects only those positions where there are women. Thus in all the three hundred and twenty-two (322) membership at the headquarters, it is only out of 107 that women are represented as shown in Table 17. Out of the total of 107, there are only 36 who are women. Overall therefore out of the total staff strength of 322 there are only 36 women, which is a mere 11%. With this, the number of women who are secretaries (20) composed of 6% of the overall 11%, with the remaining 5% shared among the

other ranks which are higher level ranks. Interestingly, there is only one male secretary. This seem to confirm the notion that secretaries are mostly women and that most women in public offices hang at the bottom of the hierarchy which in turn limits their capacity to influence policies and decisions.

On women in politics, the officer was very optimistic and encouraged more women to get into the legislature because of the performance of those already there despite their small number. This performance and the enthusiasm being shown by government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have led to many more women expressing interest in politics and other related political activities. In addition, he called on political parties to give more chances to women to enable them compete for parliamentary seats. For him, the future seems bright especially because of the current wave of press freedom, though some more efforts are needed to actualize this hope.

Whilst one of the four women deputy directors agreed with him on the future of women, she differed on opportunities for women to enhance their capacities. She expressed concern over the inability of women to rise up the hierarchy because they are not equipped for that. For her, there is the need to sensitize women to take interest in activities in the ministry that would help them upgrade themselves and seek promotion. She however admits that the government's position on affirmative action is minimally applied in the ministry. She challenges women to apply for any vacant position and be prepared and willing to take up the accompanying challenges.

On women in politics, she supports the general view that women in politics especially in parliament are doing well. The limitation to some women taking up political careers has to do mainly with the cultural perception of women and their specified roles, a perception that has tended to jeopardize the interest of otherwise competent and capable women. The future, according to her, looks bright because the current brand of female graduates are very confident, which is a key ingredient for successful political and public career life.

### 4.3.3 The Ministry of Communication

According to our key informant, traditionally, the civil service has been a male dominated institution; it is thus not surprising that there are more men than there are women. This is not to say that, the status quo is right or good but that is the reality as depicted in the number of men and women in different positions in the ministry. (See Table 18).

**Table 18** : Gender Stratification of Positions

Position/Grades	Gender		Total
	Men	Women	
Executive Class	7	4	11
% of Total	64%	36%	100%
Administrative Class	11	2	13
% of Total	85%	15%	100%
Secretarial Class	0	13	13
% of Total	0%	100%	100%
Drivers	4	0	4
% of Total	100%	0%	100%
Others (incl. cleaners)	9	5	14
% of Total	64%	36%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview with Principal Executive Officer, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

The stratification was skewed against women except in the secretarial class. The executive and the administrative class, which can influence policies, have very few women. In fact, women make up only 25% of the total

of 24 for the two categories, whilst the secretarial class alone accounted for 54% of the total number of women.

All the gender disparity notwithstanding, our key informant was of the view that challenges encountered are common to all staff in general though admittedly women have some peculiar challenges. Whilst male colleagues are supportive, this is only to an extent and that for a woman's ideas and opinions to be respected and taken seriously, she needs to be twice as assertive as a man. Also, most women colleagues are very supportive of their counterparts though again, there are isolated cases where they sometimes frustrate younger women on the job.

For her, the small number of women in the civil service is not only due to their inability to get in but also because most young women with good qualifications, vision and prospects only stay in the civil service for short durations and leave to other organizations because of the poor conditions of service. It therefore becomes difficult in some cases, to get qualified women to compete with the men for a vacant high-level position. One means of addressing this is through the Civil Service Ladies Association, which is fighting hard to ensure the institution and implementation of affirmative action in recruitment and promotion processes.

If women are to make it in public offices then they should also be offering certain courses at the tertiary level that has the potential to shoot them up like Information Technology (IT) courses, which is turning into a male profession and consequently offering better chances for young men. She observed that if some of these problems are to be resolved, then there should be clarity in the relationship and role of MOWAC and the NCWD.

On women in politics, she noted that the 'politics of insults' and the 'politics of no-appreciation of past politicians' by politicians and sometimes sanctioned by their parties have tended to be a deterrent to women getting involved in politics. Moreover, the perception of the electorate of Members of Parliament as sources of financial assistance also limits the interests women have in politics because of the huge financial expectation. She advocated that political parties should be more proactive and take up this challenge if they are truly committed to the wholistic development of the country. She stressed that all these would also be dependent on the qual-

ifications that women have, hence the necessity for training. On training, she reiterated a statement apparently made by the Head of the Civil Service, who in affirming his intention to help women upgrade themselves stated, "I want to push you (women) but I must first train you; for I won't push you untrained".

#### **4.3.4 The Ministry of Employment and Manpower Development**

The Senior Personnel Officer of the ministry granted that there is no gender discrimination in any form as far as duties and job performances are concerned although the number of women in executive and management positions is woefully inadequate and not gender balanced (See Table 19). However, he was quick to add, the often quoted and overused aphorism "women are their own enemies".

Substantiating his assertion, he remarked that nomination of women for positions or membership of boards often invite unwholesome criticism from some women colleagues to the shock of some of the men. Such behaviour tends to smack the confidence gathered by the victims. With their small number, one expects very tightly knit relationship to enhance their interests through the presentation of a common front.

The Table is constructed on the basis that, though the total number of women (19) and their positions out of the total staff strength (58) is known, there are no complete numbers for the men in the different categories. We would therefore concentrate on the women in this case. Percentages would be calculated on the basis of the overall staff strength. Overall, women make up only about 32.5% of staff of the ministry.

**Table 19:** Position of Women

<b>Position/Grade</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Director	1	1,7%
Deputy Director	1	1,7%
Assistant Director	2	3,4%
Senior Private Secretary	1	1,7%
Chief Executive Officers	2	3,4%
Private Secretary	1	1,7%
Stenographer Secretaries	4	6,9%
Typists	5	8,6%
Storekeeper	1	1,7%
Receptionists	1	1,7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32,5%</b>

**Source:** Extracted From Interview with Senior Personnel Officer, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

According to the Senior Personnel Officer, one concern that has also often contributed to the low number of women in high public office positions is the fact that, generally, women do not show interest in what goes on around them especially if it has to do with politics or governance matters. Both men and women label the few who do with derogatory titles because they are perceived as shifting off the 'acceptable norm'. According to him, education and effective sensitization could help in addressing some of these challenges and that should be the responsibility of all including the political parties who would be the immediate beneficiaries of women's talents in their quest for political power.

Adding to the above, the Deputy Director was clear on the support women receive from all colleagues and that the general problem is the understaffing of the ministry, which put a lot of pressure on all workers. For her, women should not be limited to assignment of few responsibilities because they are considered women and may not be able to carry out full-size responsibilities. This limits the potential in women and inhibits their progress and capacity development. According to her, there are more

women who have qualifications and could be appointed to public boards through a responsive affirmative action policy. She supports the numerous views on the power of education to change the stereotyping of women to particular confines, which has affected their interests and willingness to participate in politics.

#### **4.3.5 The Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City**

The Ministry has total staff strength of 57 out of which 25 are women. This represents 44% of the number of staff. Of this, only 12, that is 21% belong to the executive and administrative class whilst the secretarial class makes up the remaining 23%. The situation women find themselves in could change if the appropriate environment is created. This would enable women to set and be drivers of their own goals. This would boost their confidence level and enhance their levels of performance. Consequently, systems should be put in place through the launch of a national crusade against discriminatory practices of all forms against women. With this, women can gain needed confidence and contribute to the politics of the country by getting involved effectively in political activities.

Contributing to this, the Principal Personnel Officer, noted that the dormancy of the women's desk in the ministry should be considered for revitalization, to serve as the first point for implementing affirmative action policy. This would enhance the already good performance of those women in politics and public offices. Interestingly, she wanted women to go for the vice-presidential slot and not the presidential because according to her "that position should be for the men for the mean time". She did not however have any supportive reason for her proposition.

#### **4.3.6 The Ministry of the Interior**

The Ministry of Interior has staff strength of 63 with 20 being women, just about 32%. From this, there is only one deputy director (finance and administration), one private secretary to the minister, and one senior accounts officer. All the others belong to the other levels which are not decision-making or management levels. Thus, the scenario is not too different from those in other ministries.

It is noted that there is no affirmative action or for that matter quota system

for the employment of women and that recruitment is done on the basis of merit. Irrespective of the small number of women in the ministry, there is adequate support from male colleagues who encourage the women to take up opportunities to upgrade themselves and through delegation of duties to enable the women they work with gain some experience and thereby enhance their prospects.

On women in politics, our key informant, was of the view that, the few women in parliament are doing very well and whether the number of women in parliament in particular and in politics in general would increase would be highly dependent on their performance or output. So far, they have been doing very well with the exception of some who have not been heard of since their entry to parliament. For her, one discouraging reason for women's reluctance to launch political career is the nature of politics, which is full of insults and other unhealthy traits. Politicians and their parties should impress upon their leaders and their members to be decorous in their quest for political power.

Another important factor identified is education. According to her, education makes one confident, understand a lot of issues and can therefore contribute to discussions and debates informatively. This is one area that women are comparatively disadvantaged. As a result the current campaign on educating the girl child must be sustained. An additional problem is lack or inadequate financial resources, which have also deterred a number of women who would otherwise be interested but do not have the money for campaigns and other logistics. Here, their political parties should assist such women to influence the politics of the country.

#### **4.3.7 The Ministry of Environment and Science**

Re-emphasizing the stance of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Environment and Science stated that it has no affirmative action because the civil service recruits on the basis of merit. The only semblance of affirmative action is that more women are invited for interviews for vacant positions and since performance is the ultimate criteria, the ministry can only take on those who exhibit competence. Though the number of women in the ministry was smaller than the number of men, this could not directly be attributed to the absence of affirmative action in recruitment. Out of total

staff strength of 64, 25 (39%) are women in the following positions. See Table 20 for the gender stratification of staff. The table reflects the positions of the 25 women in the ministry, whilst the percentages reflect that of the women in the overall ministry. Thus, the women assistant directors make up only 4.7% of total staff strength of 64.

**Table 20:** Number of Women and their Positions

<b>Position/Grade</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Assistant Director	3	4,7%
Private Secretary	1	1,6%
Stenographer Secretary	5	7,8%
Stenographer Secretary I and II	7	10,9%
Records Supervisor	1	1,6%
Receptionist	1	1,6%
Telephonist	1	1,6%
Cleaners	69	9,3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39,1%</b>

**Source:** Extracted from interview with Director, Human Resource Management, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2004

According to our key informant, there are no specific problems that the women in the ministry encounter because of their gender. However, one major problem that confronts all the staff is the inadequate remuneration of the workers. As a result two women who were deputy directors resigned their position and left for better conditions and salaries elsewhere.

He opined that the Ghanaian political terrain and aspirations to high public offices is rough and can be frustrating. Most women therefore do not want to get entangled in this turmoil since there is also no guarantee that once you are a woman contestant you would win the position. Again, the small number of women in politics is as a result of lack of confidence by women who are also largely not interested in national issues. But for him, the few in politics, especially in parliament are doing very well which should be motivating for those who are interested that they can also perform and for

those who are apolitical to be encouraged to be interested in politics because 'we cannot do without them'.

Building up the level of confidence is highly, though not entirely dependent, on the educational backgrounds of the women. He was very optimistic of the future of women in politics and public life because of the policy to get more girls enrolled at all levels of the educational hierarchy. With more girls acquiring tertiary level education, the number of women in political and high public positions would see a lot of improvement for the mutual benefit of both men and women.

Contributing to the discourse, one of the assistant directors expressed the view that, there is no discrimination and that currently any woman who wants to move up has the opportunity to do so and so women should take up the challenge. To her, if women are to attain greater heights then there is the need for them to acquire the requisite educational qualification and knowledge that goes with those political and public heights since those are very challenging positions. She was of the view that though there are very few women in parliament, they are doing well and so those interested in politics and national issues should acquire information and knowledge to equip them with the capacity to perform effectively.

#### **4.3.8 Ministry of Works and Housing**

The Ministry has no affirmative action since it belongs to the civil service, which recruits on the basis of merit. For the Senior Engineer (a woman), there are no gender specific problems especially with regard to women in the Ministry but the general ones, which affect all staff in spite of gender. These include low remuneration, lack of needed logistics and poor conditions of service. Perhaps the single problem that women encounter is the combination of work and domestic responsibilities. She admits that the number of women in the Ministry is very small. For instance, out of total staff strength of 640, only 63 (9.8%) are women, most of whom are located at the lower levels or grades (See Table 21). For her, girls or women can rise up to any level if they work hard especially through their education. In her view, education is the key and government can help by putting in place the right structures to enhance opportunities for women in the public service and girls in school.

**Table 21:** Number of Women and their Positions

<b>Position/Grade</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Senior Engineer	1	0,15%
Assistant Engineer	1	0,15%
Assistant Quantity Surveyor	1	0,15%
Engineering Technician	2	0,31%
Higher Executive Officer	2	0,31%
Works Superintendent	2	0,31%
Executive Officer	1	0,15%
Senior Private Secretary	1	0,15%
Private Secretary	1	0,15%
Senior Records Assistant	2	0,31%
Records Supervisor	2	0,31%
Stenographer Sec. I & II	19	3%
Telephonist, Typist, Clerk	21	3,28%
Storekeepers	2	0,31%
Others	5	0,78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>9,8%</b>

**Source:** Extracted from Interview with Research Dept, 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2004.

The Ministry of Works and Housing is the least representative of women. This undisputedly is linked to the nature of the job, which is engineering related jobs, which traditionally has very few women. For instance, there is only one woman for the position of Senior Engineer, and Assistant Quantity Surveyor. Women in the Stenographer /Typists/ Clerical grades constitute a total of 40 which is 63% of the number of women. In spite of this poor numbers, she did not think there is the need for affirmative action.

On women in politics and public offices, our key informant was blunt on the performance of women. According to her, although the number is not too encouraging, they are doing well and serving as role models and encouraging more women to take up politics as a career. The current education

trend, which emphasizes the education of the girl child, holds a brighter future for women in general to rise to greater heights in politics and public positions especially because they constitute the bulk of the population.

#### **4.3.9 The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

The position of women in the Ministry is not too different from the other ministries. Though, the study could not get the details of all the positions and the location of women in the structure of the administration, it was noted that there are two female directors and five assistant directors. Besides these, majority of the rest of the women belong to the secretarial class and the ministry has no policy on affirmative action. The trend is being reversed through Gender Desk Offices (GDOs) created at the ministries and women's associations or clubs which all endeavour to help women in diverse ways to upgrade themselves by responding to training opportunities. Some women directors have been able to reach those positions because they took advantage of educational and training opportunities offered or made available.

The number of women in politics, according to one of the assistant directors, is not encouraging. This is as a result of domestic commitment by most women who play multiple roles. There are also, according to our key informant, young unmarried women who are scared to enter political life because of the perception that, it will affect their chances of getting married. Such perceptions are as dangerous as they are erroneous and do not augur well for improvement in the lives of women. Since the root is the traditional role prescribed for women, efforts must be made to ensure that the right thing is done. It tends to limit women and stifle alternative perspectives.

The contribution of one of the Senior Records Supervisor was more or less a call for senior women colleagues to assist and encourage younger women in the institutions so that they can develop their capacities. She surmised that, workshops and seminars should not be limited to only the senior level staff but the junior level staff must be given such opportunities so that they can use them as channels of voicing and addressing their grievances. For fear of being victimized, the junior workers are unable to tell their story or share views on issues of concern to them. This, according to her, should be addressed. For her, education is very important and even though they are in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, most women do not have requisite qualification that makes them good candidates for higher positions. It is for the same reason that there are very few women in politics.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Public administration of which the civil service and general public service are integral components is the driving force for the formulation and particularly the implementation of government policies and programmes. As part of the main political system, it is within this subsystem that authoritative allocation of resources is effectively translated into projects and programmes. Critically therefore, the current situation of very few women in key decision making positions has a lot of implications for not only women as a gender but the nation as a whole. It is important that this trend is reversed in a more concrete, sustained manner to ensure that outcomes from such efforts reflect outputs.

One area of concern that majority of our respondents emphasized was in education of women. For most of them, with the emphasis on education as a developmental tool especially the education of girls, the future looks bright for women in politics and the excuse of non- or inadequate education used against women getting certain promotion, as legitimate as it may be, would substantially be addressed. This will plug out this whole often employed by political parties and other institutions to crowd out women. It is admitted that this is a long-term measure which could start now because time is running fast. Consequently, the next chapter looks specifically at education as a tool to enhance the status of women.

# **CHAPTER FIVE:**

## **EDUCATION AS A TOOL OF ENHANCEMENT FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC OFFICES**

### **5.1 Introduction**

One of the outstanding recommendations by all key informants was the importance of education as an enhancement tool for women's self upgrading for political and high public offices. Education in all its facets has long been accepted as one of the most effective instruments through which the behaviour of an individual is redefined to conform to societal expectations. Functionally, education can be said to be necessary because it contributes to the survival of society whilst its technical function is to integrate and manage tension in society. The implication is that education prepares people to play societal roles without which there is the probability of societal disintegration (Ayensah 2001:29-30).

According to UNESCO (1998), education is a contributory factor in changing individuals in the managerial sense of developing human capital and in a much deeper sense; education makes new persons out of individuals. It therefore acts as a force that leads to the empowerment of human beings. Put differently, education plays a critical role in human resource development, which is the foundation for nation building and essential for sustainable development especially in developing countries and tends to affect all variables associated with development. Developing countries are highly aware of this relationship and have continued to give a standard projection to education on their list of priorities (UN Press Release, March 2003).

## 5.2 The Ghanaian Scenario

This recognition has not eluded Ghana. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has long been aware that education is a basic human right. In fact, as far back as 1961, education was made a birth right. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Impact Study, Ghana's Report: 35). The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana reaffirms the importance of education and the priority placed on education by the people and government of Ghana. Under the Directive Principles of State Policy, article 38 (1) states categorically "the state shall provide educational facilities at all levels and in all the regions of Ghana, and shall, to the greatest extent feasible, make those facilities available to all citizens". This is reiterated by article 25 (1) which also notes " All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities..."

In order to realize this, the constitution further asserts that basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all; secondary education in all its forms shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means; higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means whilst ensuring the development of a system of schools with adequate facilities at all levels (Section 1, a, b, c and e).

In spite of all these, girls have been the victims of inadequate education. Whilst it is acknowledged that gender disparity is receiving some attention, there are still gaps. For instance, there is a corresponding increase in the gap between girls and boys enrollment in proportion to the level of education. Thus, girls represent 50, 47, 45 and 41% at the pre-school, primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels respectively. There is a further decline at the university level to 30%. (Ministry of Education, "Education Strategic Plan, 2003 to 2015, Vol.I: Policies, Targets and Strategies", May 2003).

At the University of Ghana for instance, the number of girls is problematically very disproportional to the number of boys pursuing courses. Table 5.1 gives a graphic presentation of the enrolment of females and males in the University of Ghana, Legon, for the 2003/2004 academic year.

**Table 22** : First Degree Enrolment for 2003/2004 Academic Year

Faculty/School	Gender		Total	Female % of Total
	Male	Female		
Arts/Social Science	8866	5943	14809	40%
Agric/Home. Science	394	141	535	26%
College of H. Sciences	496	283	779	36%
Law (LBB)	109	63	171	37%
School of Admin.	1516	765	2281	34%
Science	1606	783	2389	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12986</b>	<b>7978</b>	<b>20964</b>	<b>38%</b>

**Source:** University of Ghana, Basic Statistics 2004, p. 3.

Thus overall, women's enrolment of total student population is only 38% with agriculture and home science and the sciences in that order registering the lowest number of female students. The picture is even more dismal as one moves up the academic ladder as seen in Tables 23 and 24 below.

**Table 23:** Postgraduate Enrolment by Faculty and gender (M.Phil), 2003/2004

Faculty/School	Gender		Total	Female % of Total
	Male	Female		
Arts	96	20	116	17%
Agric/Home. Science	54	11	65	17%
College of H. Sciences	11	30	14	21%
Law	0	1	1	100%
Science	106	58	164	35%
School of Admin.	380	141	521	27%
Social Science	197	88	285	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>1166</b>	<b>28%</b>

Source: University of Ghana, Legon, Basic Statistics, 2004, p. 3.

**Table 24:** Postgraduate Enrolment by faculty and gender (Ph.D), 2003/2004

Faculty/School	Gender		Total	Female % of Total
	Male	Female		
Arts	23	5	28	17.8%
Agric/Home. Science	13	1	14	7.1%
College of H. Sciences	2	0	2	0%
Law	0	1	1	100%
Science	15	5	20	25%
School of Admin.	1	0	1	0%
Social Science	25	11	36	30.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>22.5%</b>

Source: University of Ghana, Legon, Basic Statistics, 2004, p.3.

Even in the so-called female courses, the social sciences, the number of females is equally small. For instance, there are fewer females by percentage points taking Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in the social sciences than there are in M.Phil science. At the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) level, there is a drop in percentage points of females taking social science and science courses respectively. It is observed that, the higher one moves up the academic ladder, the fewer the numbers and the fewer the number of females.

### **5.3 Benefits of Education For Girls/Women**

#### **5.3.1 Social Benefits of Girl's Education**

The value of girls' education would be addressed from three broad perspectives; the social, economic and political. A girl who gets only basic education is more likely to marry later than a non-educated girl. Thus, educated women are expected to have access to and understand information important for child survival, personal development, and leadership skills. Educated women have information on consequences of social vices and how best to prevent them, have basic knowledge on health issues and the proper use of contraceptives and can read and understand instructions which reduces the risk of accidents due to lack of knowledge and information on otherwise common and basic health and social matters.

Educated women are also more likely to reject harmful social and cultural practices and acquire knowledge on existing legal provisions against such practices like female genital mutilation, early child marriages, forced and exploitative labour and the need to give equal treatment to both boys and girls because of the inherent potential of each. An educated woman would therefore not expose her daughter to such harmful practices, which would not only affect the right of the child but also jeopardize her future. More importantly, she would inculcate in her children these acquired values through the socialization process from the home to be buttressed by other socialization agents like educational institutions (Whydah 1992: 9).

These would not only reduce resources channeled into informal education and programmes embarked on to educate people on such issues but would ensure that women contribute to national development and change the

social status of their children especially girls and reduce negative stereotyping of the female gender and the consequences of these negativities on society.

### **5.3.2 Economic Benefits of Girls' Education**

Educating girls offers them opportunities in employment hitherto reserved for men. It is heartwarming to see girls venturing into male-dominated disciplines especially at the tertiary level and gaining competitive, challenging job opportunities with equally attractive remuneration. It also helps increase productivity and income. It is stated that for every additional year a girl spends in school, income increases by 10%, infant mortality and fertility rate drops by 10% and agriculture productivity rises by another 10% (UN Press Release, *ibid*: 10).

Even though the number of women in the formal sector, especially in recognized and respected professions, in management or executive positions is not to an expected level, we cannot deny the fact that there have been some improvement. This means that women must be able to earn enough to ensure not only sheer survival for their children but also ensure guaranteed provision of other basic needs like education.

However, the labour market is characterized by a trend that does not favour women. For instance, training and standards of education required and in fact demanded for highly paid jobs continues to be an illusion for most women. Secondly, recruitment and promotion policies sometimes make it almost impossible for women to take up certain jobs because of the difficulties of combining those job specifications with being a wife and a mother. For many women, the best and easier option is to go for non-challenging jobs with few or no opportunities for exploration and progress. Associated with the last option is equally low wages and remuneration, a situation, which disempowers women economically and politically (Ocran, 2001:150).

Whatever the scenario, it cannot be disputed that education and higher education for that matter places women in a secured socio-economic and political setting which equips them with the needed tools for advancement, self-confidence, influencing decisions which affects their society and in

addition, serve as an unquestionable role model for the youth especially the girls. Furthermore, through her contribution to all dimensions of life, the educated woman enhances the quality of life, which overtly or covertly impinge on the development of the nation. Additionally, an economically-empowered woman not only helps in reducing the financial burden of her family but also whilst not adding to societal burden can help put smiles on the faces of the unfortunate in society. This can be done through direct support or through the sharing of vital information to address anti-social phenomena.

With few exceptions, an educated woman who is in the world of commerce, is much more likely to do good, clean business, have greater opportunities of having high level partners, get the right information from the right source at the right time and diligently apply it, affording her the opportunity to be abreast with current trends in the global commercial environment and therefore equally competitive in the challenging world of commerce and globalization.

All of these and other economic directions definitely add positively to the national economy, increase the growth rate needed for a boost in the economy, increase tax returns and add to the creation of wealth as the basis for reducing poverty in Ghana- the framework for national advancement. The World Bank has reiterated this by stating that “ensuring that girls have education is the single best investment that can be made in the developing world today and that if countries want to achieve sustainable development they must turn their attention to girls’ education” (Evening News April 9,2001: 7)

### **5.3.3 Political Benefits of Girls’ Education**

The education of women is needed for the development, sustenance and consolidation of democracy. Whilst it is true that in Ghana, there is no constitutional embargo on level of education for political candidate aspirants, the reality is however diametrically opposed to the constitutional provisions. In order to close the yawning gap between men and women in decision-making positions especially in the political sector, there is the need for women to become educated.

Education is fundamental to effective participation in national politics since parliamentary and presidential proceedings are conducted in the English language (Allah-Mensah, 1998 and 2001). In fact, in some African Countries like Malawi, all women Members of Parliament had to pass an English competency test (Hirschman, 1991: 1683). Research has incontrovertibly indicated that one of the militating factors against women's involvement in politics and therefore their inconspicuous presence in decision making is the lack of education, which has directly affected their level of self-confidence and limited their self-acceptance and assertiveness.

Besides, the very bases of democracy, which is the hallmark of Ghana's governance, require participation by all. Women's participation in politics creates a congenial atmosphere needed to "humanize gender relations in politics" corroborating the point that democracy without meaningful representation of women defeats the very fundamentals of the practice. According to the UNDP, a gender balance in decision-making is not only desirable and constitutionally expected but also essential if women's rights, concerns and interests are to ascend on to the development agenda (1997:7).

It has been argued that participation by women in politics is not only a means to realizing the broad agenda of good governance but also emphasizes the point that without their involvement, progress in other areas of development is likely to be halted because women's exclusion from politics deprives government of half of its citizen's talents and contributions. The implication here is that, when women are educated and gain the skills and qualities needed to participate in political decision-making, they contribute immensely to the development of the nation since politics is the arena for authoritatively allocating societal values; that is, taking decisions on the basis of available resources to influence the direction of the nation. With girls' education these and many more values would not only be unraveled when vigorously pursued, but would change the course and speed of development which will lead Ghana into the kind of prosperity we all cherish and yearn for.

## 5.4 Conclusion

There is certainly no doubt about the indispensability of education for national development. The need for education was one of the strongest recommendations made by almost all respondents. This is not only significant but also challenging for all stakeholders in the national development. Whilst the immediate responsibility for educating girls might be borne by the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs; it needs the backing of all other ministries, agencies and departments and civil society.

Political parties should therefore not give cosmetic commitment to education of children and especially girls, but should make it a key component and priority of their campaign strategies and manifestoes. If the education of girls is taken on seriously by all political parties without uncalled for politicization, additional achievements would be guaranteed.

In order to present a wholistic front, emphasis on innovative means of giving functional literacy and matured systems of education to women especially who cannot go back to the classroom, but who are ambitious to get education should be created.

Whilst the study acknowledges that, there is more to getting into politics than one's educational status, it is simultaneously acknowledging the contribution of education to the development of political careers for effective performance, the exceptions notwithstanding.

# **CHAPTER SIX:**

## **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: A CHALLENGE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a synopsis of the findings which serve as the basis for conclusions and recommendations and the implications of all these for women in politics and public offices and the challenge or onerous duty placed on political parties to ensure progressive and sustained increase in number of women in politics and public office and more importantly, their contribution to nation-building, democratic development and socio-economic enhancement.

### **6.2 Findings/Observations**

The study made a number of observations. One of this is that, there is enthusiasm for women's participation in politics. In addition, it was noted that, though the number of women in parliament is woefully inadequate, they are doing very well and should serve as role models for those who aspire to same or similar positions in the public sector. These inadequate numbers of women is also clearly evident in the public sector organizations. More strategically, majority of the few women are found at the very low ranks of the hierarchy, thereby dimming their chances of contributing meaningfully to decision-making or policy formulation.

The institutions in the study mostly stated that there is no affirmative action and that recruitment is done on the basis of performance in line with public service employment requirement. However, some admitted that, in cases of vacancy, women who qualify are encouraged to apply.

But then, there are a number of challenges. Several reasons, which are not too far-fetched, have been adduced in the literature and at different public for a why women's representation is woefully below reasonable targets.

Among these are the traditional and cultural factors based on very strong patriarchal pedestal, which affect the participation of women in decision-making even at the very private levels like the homes. Cornwell states that, the mutual impact of gender issues on the establishment and maintenance

of democratic processes cannot be examined by looking at democracy at a fairly centralized level, that is the public domain only. It is equally important, according to her, to focus on the lowest level at how intra-household power relations affect the opportunities of women to participate in any democratic actions. Reiterating this, Rai remarks "... the time and resources at their disposal to cross the boundary of their private lives into the public sphere remained very limited" (Rai 1994: 240). These are often based on culture and tradition.

Tsikata makes some interesting observation on the issue of culture and tradition. She observes that what people often refer to as tradition and culture are no more than the institutions, practices and ideologies which are the framework within which social relations unfolds, interactions take place and identities established (Tsikata 2001: 268).

Furthermore, there is limited literacy for most women who subsequently lack access to information and proper utilization of available information and opportunities due to other complexity of factors. Tsikata's rendition that though education is important and that it should not be used as a barrier to women's participation in politics is well made. Nonetheless, it is crucial to realize that, education or lack of it though not constitutionally and officially sanctioned, is one key subtle requirement for official positions in political parties or public offices, though there might be rare exceptions like the case of the 1996 Northern Regional Chairman of the New Patriotic Party (who was a man) (See *ibid* :270).

This is one contentious issue that has been a great challenge to women's participation and so long as it is used, women need to find ways of addressing it. In fact, Tsikata's submission that women with limited or no education have played significant role in the independence struggle and in other political roles is undisputed. We may however note that, having some level of education could increase the performance level of women who do not have it at all and moving higher on the educational level could also effectively enhance performance. We will however like to sound an alibi that this is not always the case, though in majority of the cases there have been improved performance.

In addition to these, the level of economic emancipation or self-sufficiency of most women but especially those who would have loved to contest political positions is also a knotty one. There is also the challenge of support from institutions and family members and the wider society in which they live and would function should they win contested elections. Other concerns that militate against women's effective participation in politics include public speaking skills; the unsubstantiated spill of moral weakness of women politicians (Tsikata *ibid*: 270), lack of belief in women's potentials and capabilities and assumed apolitical nature of women in general *inter alia* (Allah-Mensah, 1997: 132-133).

It was realized that generally, the small number of women in politics and public office was attributed to low levels of education, domestic obligations and limited number in formal sector employment among others. This however, is not a peculiarly Ghanaian problem. Writing on gender and politics in the third world, Waylen points out that, "the low political representation of women is attributed, among other factors, to low levels of literacy and formal sector employment among women and the operation of the legal system...Many women are constrained by their roles in the private sphere, which prevents them from participating in the public sphere on the same terms as men and gaining the experience deemed necessary for a career in politics"(Waylen *ibid*: 11)

The recent attempt by government to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality in public policy, planning and in delivery of services received a boost when in December 1998, cabinet approved the Affirmative Action White Paper. As a means of implementation, all government ministries were mandated to have gender desks officers (GDOs). However, some respondents noted the ineffectiveness of these gender desks. Perhaps it was due to this realization that the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs organized a workshop for Gender Desk Officers in the Ministries with the theme "Promoting Gender Mainstreaming and Children's Issues in Ghana-Role of GDOs in the MDAs" (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, News Bulletin, Vol.1, No.1, Jan-March, 2003, pp.6-7).

In addition, there have been other avenues to ensure that the systemic, cultural and traditional discrimination and the subtle institutionalization of gender discrimination are identified and addressed. These are done through seminars, workshops, legislation and advocacy. In fact, one of such dynamic move is that by Civil Society organizations spearheaded by ABANTU for development of the Women's Manifesto, which is to serve as the guiding framework for addressing the problems of women's participation in the process of planning, policy making, democracy and development.

Another issue raised consistently throughout the study is the nature and meaning of politics and how that affects women and their interests in politics and this has the tendency of discouraging women into politics especially as a career. This requires that the nature and character of politics in Ghana has also become a deterrent to women getting involved in politics and should be the concern of both politicians and government.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

A number of recommendations are made for consideration by all stakeholders.

1. It is recommended that political parties should endeavour to be more pragmatic, committed and forthcoming on women's role in politics and public offices. This is an important aspect of Ghana's evolving democracy, which fortunately is built on the principles of equality and respect for fundamental human rights. Since, the number of women in politics and their positions on the public bureaucratic hierarchy are not to encouraging, it is recommended that, political parties and all stakeholders who are interested in the consolidation of democracy in Ghana should be at the forefront of this drive for increased participation by women in politics and policy-making.
2. The above implies that, political parties and government should put in place constitutional, structural and systemic changes that are women-friendly in the organizational set ups and operational mechanisms to give support to verbal, legal and documentary declarations.

3. Efforts should be made to carry out detailed, scientific studies of this nature on a more national scale over a period to identify, unravel and analyze the socio-economic, political and cultural/traditional dynamics that impede women's participation in politics and public offices over a sustained period of time to be updated at reasonably regular intervals. This will bring out dynamics, which will be crucial for policy direction and strategic response to the changes over the said period. It will ensure that, actions taken would be information and knowledge base and not mere assumptions.
4. Collaboration between all MDAs, political parties and others in civil society should receive paramount consideration. Covert aversion, which underlies overt support of the cause of women, will not help the process of ensuring gender mainstreaming. In other words, women's political and public office positions would be better enhanced with genuine support rather than hypocritical avowal.
5. The preparation of the Women's Manifesto by civil society groups led by Abantu for Development and Netroight gives an indication of the apparent weakness of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) in addressing pertinent issues of concern to Ghanaian women. It is important therefore that, such an effort is given the needed support by political parties and government and should not be perceived from a sectional perspective. Sectionalism, in this context, could be counter productive to efforts at addressing issues that have global benefits. The comprehensiveness associated with women in politics and public offices should engender universal support.
6. The concern raised by our key respondents on the character of Ghana's politics should be given adequate and immediate attention because it has an impact on the electorate and the development of the political culture. It is often during political campaigns that political parties exhibit a lot of indecency by attacking their opponents, unfortunately in the most politically unacceptable and socially divisive language. Whilst it is true that even in the most

democratically advanced countries, political parties carry out “opposition research” where results are used to displace their opponents, in most of the cases, these are on issues and less on personalities (see Allah-Mensah, 1998). Though this is acceptable, there is decorum in the language used or adopted and is more policy focused. Thus, political decorum is needed for healthy and clean politics that would be more attractive to women and for the general political development of the country.

7. There is need for more commitment from government and its institutions for the course of women not only in playing a role in the economy but to create opportunities and facilitate the upgrade of women in numbers and position in politics and public office.
8. Efforts by CSOs should be coordinated to reduce fragmentation in order to increase impact and attach some level of seriousness to all the efforts being made. Though the existing support and collaboration between different CSOs is commendable, there is no doubt that this can be improved. In this context understanding the dynamics of government and how to bring them on board without skepticism from both sides is a key to success. This will keep the vision focused and achievable.
9. Educational institutions from the second cycle to the tertiary level have a major role to play. These institutions hold the key to ensuring that the gender disparity in enrolment especially at the highest levels is addressed. There must be conscious effort towards effective gender mainstreaming in especially tertiary institutions. In this connection, special opportunities in terms of scholarships, admission and flexible hours for further studies beyond the first degree, for instance, can be instituted, whilst the affirmative action for girls in some tertiary institutions could be expanded and sustained. Training opportunities in the MDAs should be more women-focused and gender friendly to build the capacities of women in these institutions. The assigned socio-cultural roles for women should not be seen or used as an exclusionary excuse.
10. The media play indispensable role because of the potent of information. Consequently, positive and progressive steps taken by the media on the issues raised or any other issue that has the ten-

dency to advance this course of increasing the number and presence and impact of women in politics and public offices is most crucial.

11. There is also the need for attitudinal change even among women towards the whole issue of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming entails identifying and eliminating social inequalities between the sexes at every stage of planning and decision-making. It goes beyond efforts aimed purely at helping women to achieve equal opportunity and explicitly focuses on both men and women. In fact, it is both a policy goal and a method for achieving equality between men and women (Schayan 2002: 27). In this context, advocacy strategies which have not worked over the years because of their seemingly 'attacking' nature should be reconsidered to give way to more accommodating strategies which have the potency of winning even the most recalcitrant gender opposed person, male or female.
12. It is further recommended that development partners take keen interest in gender issues and ensure that government policies they support have very strong gender sensitivity in order to achieve intended developmental objectives.
13. There is the need for government to ensure that there is an effective policy on gender and sensitization of key decision-makers on the topic and the practice of gender mainstreaming for optimum application.
14. In a nutshell, women need to take advantage of any opportunity that offers itself for the achievement of the goal of increasing the numbers, presence and impact of women in politics and public office. Fortunately, the evidence over the years point to increasing expression of interest by many more women and that is expected to be exponentially maintained.

## 6.4 Conclusions

As indicated earlier, women's representation in both politics and public offices especially in appointive public positions is highly dependent on the policies or manifestos of political parties. This is because, the manifestoes of political parties become the governance framework for designing policies, programmes and projects. Supporting this well over two decades ago, Randall states, "women's penetration of national and local assemblies is in turn largely determined by their position within the main political parties" (Randall 1982: 75). Consequently, if political parties' manifestoes do not concretely address matters of concern to women as identified in the study in their manifestoes, it would be utopian or at worst hypocritical to claim, as it were, to be championing the course of women in Ghana. Irrespective of women's different political affiliations and expressed interest in politics, if the supporting machinery, notably the political parties do not show expected and needed support and enthusiasm, it would be almost impossible for women to achieve the targets set for their participation in politics and in public offices.

Public office positions for women are as crucial as positions in politics. In fact, there is a relationship between politics and administration hence the difficulty in dichotomizing public administration from politics, in spite of Woodrow Wilson's assertion that "politics is the hurry and strife part of administration, which should be separated from politics".

However, this study contends that, a strict separation between politics and administration is not only utopian but also hypocritical especially from the perspective of policy making and implementation. This is not to dismiss the characteristics of neutrality of the public bureaucracy and thereby endorse its politicization but rather to ensure that there is a proper link between the political structures and public system to ensure effective planning, policy making and implementation and evaluation and monitoring of programmes, policies and projects.

Such linkages should not take place without the involvement of women. The kernel of this also lies in the fact that, whether women are well represented or not, the policies made have an impact on them and hence the importance of examining the gendered nature of the state (Waylen, *ibid*: 13) and its impact on women.

Thus, in addressing the developmental challenges of the country, which seems to be the core of all the objectives of political parties' quest for political power, the position of women in the political system and administrative structures ought to receive maximum and equal attention. The urgency and zeal with which political parties contest for elections because of their espoused need to bring about development and eradicate poverty should be translated into addressing the low levels of women in politics and public offices or positions. Put differently, the zeal for the quest for political power by political parties should be extended to efforts to ensure that women get involved and represented.

This study concludes that the affirmation by political parties to bring about development without a consideration of women's involvement in very meaningful ways makes a mockery of development efforts especially in an era of vibrant gender activism. Pietila and Vickers reiterate this by stating that "the idea that the role of men in sustainable development is as important as the role of women should be taken into account...indeed, no sustainable development can be achieved without a change in men's gender roles, as well as women's" (Pietila and Vickers 1994:151). The presupposition here is that there are different roles for men and women in the development process, each of which should be given attention

The findings from the survey thus corroborate some of the findings about women in the public sector, though with slight variations. For instance, Waylen notes that there are often large numbers of women employed in state bureaucracies, but few are found at the top of the state hierarchies in all types of political systems. Whilst our study cannot confirm the large number of female employees in Ghana's state bureaucracy due to contrary findings, it can without any difficulty, agree with views on women's position on the hierarchy. This uneven representation of women undoubtedly makes the state hierarchy or bureaucracy highly skewed in favour of male gender

to the disadvantage of the female gender. In fact, this is even stretched to cover the very character of the bureaucratic system, which is built, and operate with a well-embedded masculine approach. (Waylen Ibid: 13).

It is long overdue for a careful consideration by all state actors and non-state actors to be given to the issue of women representation in the politics and public office. The nation cannot afford to miss all the dynamics women bring to the policy, project and programme design, implementation and evaluation if afforded the opportunity. This is critical and inevitable if Ghana wants to make further progress on poverty reduction and enhance the quality of life of the generality of Ghanaians; especially if we consider gender mainstreaming as a systematic strategy to promote equal opportunities for women and men and to break down traditional role patterns (Schayan 2002: 27) that are counter productive.

More significantly, it must be noted that 'development without gender mainstreaming is endangered development'. This should be given consideration by all stakeholders who are drivers, supporters, formulators, implementers and evaluators of development policies, programmes and projects; the basis of our struggles as a developing nation.

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### **Manifestoes of Political Parties**

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Ministry of Information, Deputy Director and Chief Records Officer, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

Ministry of Employment and Manpower Development, Deputy Director and Senior Personnel Officer, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

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Convention People's Party (CPP), National Women's Deputy Organiser, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

People's National Convention (PNC), Women's Organizer,  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

National Democratic Congress, Regional Women's Organizer and First  
Deputy Women's National Organizer, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

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7<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

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National Media Commission (NMC), Executive Secretary, Director of  
Research and Monitoring, Secretary to Executive Secretary, 9<sup>th</sup> March  
2004.

Electoral Commission, Senior Personnel Relations Officer, 24<sup>th</sup> March  
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Resource Officer and Investigator, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

National Commission of Civic Education, Regional Director, Deputy  
Director, Greater Accra Region 4<sup>th</sup> March 2004 and Assistant Civic  
Education Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2004.

# APPENDICES

## **Appendix I: Membership of the Constitutional Committee**

Dr. S. K. B. Asante, a constitutional lawyer and chairman of the Committee.

Mrs Justice Annie Jagge (the first Ghanaian female judge and a retired appeal court judge) member.

Osagyefo Oseadeeyo Dr. Agyeman-Badu (Dormahene) member.

Mr. L.J Chinery-Hesse member.

Dr. E. V. O Dankwa.

Dr. K. Afari Gyan.

Dr. Charles D. Jebuni (all lecturers at the University of Ghana, Legon) Members.

Mr. Ebo Bentsi-Enchill.

Mrs. Sandra Ofori-Boateng- Secretary to the Committee, Member.

*(Two Women)*

## **Appendix II: Membership of some Public Boards and Commissions**

### **Appendix II (a)**

#### **Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice**

Mr. Emile Short- Commissioner.

Mr. Benjamin Kwasi Oppong- Deputy Commissioner PE/AC.

Mrs. Anna Bossman- Deputy Commissioner L/I.

Mrs. Chris Dadzie- Director PE/AC.

Dr. Bondzie Simpson- Director PE/AC.

*(Two Women)*

**Appendix II (b)**

**National Media Commission**

Mr. Wilson Kusi-Atansah- Ghana National Association of Teachers Representative.

Hon. Joe Baidoe-Ansah- Presidential Representative.

Ms. Gifty A. Asantewa Ayeh- Presidential Representative.

Hon. John Akolgo Tia- Parliamentary Representative.

Hon. Abraham Ossei-Aidoo- Parliamentary Representative.

Hon. Kwame Osei Prempeh- Parliamentary Representative.

Mr. Paul Adu-Gyamfi- Ghana Bar Association.

Mr. Kofi Asamoah- Trades Union Congress.

Prof. Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh- Media Training Institution Representative.

Mrs. Gifty Affenyi Dadzie- Ghana Journalists Association.

Mr. Yao Dziekpor- Ghana Journalists Association.

Mr. Kinsford Amoah- Christian Group.

Mr. Saeed Kwaku Gyan- Muslim Group.

Mrs. Rose Fynn- National Council on Women and Development.

Mr. Reginald D. Laryea- Institute of Public Relations/Advertising Association.

Alhaji Abubakar Sidiik Ahmed- Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association.

Mr. Isaac Fritz Andoh- Private Newspaper Publishers Association.

Mrs. Helena Asamoah-Hassan- Ghana Association of Writers/ Ghana Library Association.

*(Four Women)*

**Appendix II (c)**

**National Commission on Civic Education**

Mr. Laary Bimi- Chairman.

Mrs. Doris Ocansey- Deputy Chairperson.

Mrs. Augustina Akosua Akumanyi- Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. E. K. T. Addo- Member.

Mama Adokuwa Asigble IV- Member.

*(Three Women)*

**Appendix II (d)**

**Electoral Commission**

Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan- Chairman.

Mr. David Adenze- Kangah- Deputy Chairman (Finance and Administration).

Mr. K. Sarfo Kantanka- Deputy Chairman (Operations).

Mrs. Paulina Adobea Dadzana- (Administrator) Member.

Nana Amba Eyiiba I, Efutuhemma and Krontihene of Oguaa Traditional Area- Member.

Madam Eunice Akweley Roberts- (Educationist) Member.

Mr. Aggrey Fynn- (Management Consultant) Member.

*(Three Women)*

**Appendix II (e)**

**Forestry Commission**

Mr. F. W. Addo- Ashong- Chairman.

Mr. Anthony S. K. Boachie-Dapaah- Member.

Mr. E.B Noah- (Representative, Ghana Wildlife, Trade and Industry) Member.

Mr. Emmanuel Dzokoto- (Representative, Professional Foresters) Member.

Ms. Cynthia Nunoo- (Representative, NGOs in Forest and Wildlife Management) Member.

Mr. Peter Boateng- Member.

Mr. Kojo Wireko-Brobbe- Member.

Hon. Yaw Asiedu-Mensah- (MP, Dormaa West) Member.

Nana Nkuah Okumdom III- (Omanhene, Sefwi-Wiawso Traditional Area) Member.

*(One Woman)*

## **Appendix II (f)**

### **Lands Commission**

Mr. Justice Isaac Richard Aboagye- Chairman.

Osahene Kwaku Aterkyi- (NHC) Member.

Mr. Emmanuel Tetteh Danyo- (GNAF&F) Member.

Mr. Kwabena Berchie-Antwi- (GBA) Member.

Dr. Joseph Paul Okang- (GIS) Member.

Mr. Jonathan Addo Allotey- (EPA) Member.

Mr. Edward Puowole Karbo- (T&CPD) Member.

Mr. Eustace Nii-Amah Kumi-Bruce- (UERLC) Member.

Mr. Mosobila Kpaama- (UERLC) Member.

Mr. Kwame Agyapong Boafo- (AR) Member.

Alhaji Naa Abubakari Von Salifu- (NR) Member.

Mr. Michael Zewu Glover- (VR) Member.

Mr. Edmund Salifu Adam- (UWR) Member.

Mr. Samuel Asare Atuobi- (ER) Member.

Mr. Paul Kwabena Damoah- (WR) Member.

Nana Kofi Ennin Saful- (CR) Member.

Mr. Akwasi Ameyaw Cheremeh- (BAR) Member.

Prof. George Kofi Ansah Ofosu-Amaah- (GAR) Member.

Mr. Ibrahim Hamidu Baryeh- Member.

*(No Woman)*

# ACRONYMS

CA-Consultative Assembly

CBC-Catholic Bishops Conference

CC-Christian Council

CE-Committee of Experts

CHRAJ-Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice

CPP-Convention Peoples' Party

CSOs-Civil Society Organizations.

DACF-District Assemblies Common Fund

DAs- District Assemblies

DCE- District Chief Executive

DWM-December Women's Movement

EC-Electoral Commission

FES-Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

GCPP-Ghana Consolidated Popular Party

LC-Lands Commission

MCE-Metropolitan/Municipal Chief Executive

MOWAC-Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs

MP-Member of Parliament

NCCE-National Commission for Civic Education

NCD-National Commission for Democracy

NDC-Nationa Democratic Congress

NGOs-Non-Governmental Organizations

NMC-National Media Commission

NPP-New Patriotic Party

NUGS-National Union of Ghanaian Students

PM-Presiding Member

PNC-Peoples' Convention Party

PNDC-Provisional National Defence Council

UTAG-University Teachers Association of Ghana