

# Factors Affecting Citizens' Participation in the Decentralization Process in Ghana

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**Abstract** Participation in decision-making is the root of democratization, as democratization is widely believed to be rooted in decentralization. As such, citizens' participation in the decentralization process will bring governance closer to the people. The focus of the study was to explore the factors that affect the citizens' participation in Ghana's decentralization process. The researcher used the case study design for the study. Both questionnaire and interview protocol were used for data gathering. One hundred and six people in the area were conveniently sampled to become respondents in the study. For the method of data analysis, the researcher used tables and percentages. The study found out that the office of the DCE and how the DCE is selected, Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members of the district assembly and the motivation given them, internal funds mobilization, cooperation among stakeholders, education given to the citizens and others were the factors that generally affected the programme in the Central Tongu District. The study recommended that the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should establish monitoring mechanisms to assess the extent citizens' engagement/participation in the decentralization process and addresses depilating factors that hinder the citizens' participation in the decentralization process in the CTD and beyond CTD.

**Keywords:** citizen, participation, factors, stakeholders, decentralization, Ghana

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## 1. Introduction

An informed, concerned and participatory citizenry is the cornerstone of democracy. Ghana's political history since her independence in 1957 reflects an alternation between civilian governments and military regimes. These governments practiced various forms of Public Administration: de-concentration, devolution, delegation, and decentralization, over the past half a century of Ghana's nationhood as a state.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides in Article 240 (1) (d) and (e) that (d).

As far as practicable, persons in the service of local government shall be subject to the effective control of local authorities, and (e) To ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance.

The Local Government structure with Urban, Zonal and Town Councils and Unit Committees established by [1] provides under the Fifth Schedule (9) that unit committees were to "provide a focal point for the discussion of local problems and take remedial action where necessary or make recommendations to the assembly where appropriate,

through the relevant Urban, Zonal or Town Council". One other specific objective of Ghana's decentralization process is to promote and sustain community participation including decision-making for development benefit. These provisions have made the individual a major player in the decentralization process. However, there is a question of the individual's participation in the decentralization process. The lack of awareness of the citizens of their roles and responsibilities in the decentralization process may not augur well in the process of nation building.

There have been several calls to empower the citizens at the local levels to be more participatory in the decentralization process [2]. Despite the fact that the individuals are aware that they are to vote during elections in selecting representatives to various levels of the local government system, the seeming ignorance of citizens about their ownership of those institutions suggest that they have little knowledge about their roles as stakeholders in the implementation of the decentralization process. After elections, most citizens play very little role in the decentralization process. It is also becoming clear that most Ghanaians (individuals) do not really understand the policy frameworks of governments, the decentralization process notwithstanding. Considering the sensitive nature of our young democracy, the researcher is taking a critical look at the factors that affect citizens' views/opinions of

the decentralization process in connection to the citizens (individuals) participation in the decentralization process to consider how this potentially powerful tool can be utilized for the benefit of all.

Two related concepts, the concept of subsidiary, which holds that decisions should be taken at the most appropriate level of government and establishes a presumption that this level will be the lowest available (Van Kersbergen and Verbeck, 1994) cited by [3] and Global Development, Agenda 21, of the United Nations' action programme for sustainable development have been employed in this study. The Agenda 21 places particular emphasis on consultation, cooperation, transparency, accountability, capacity building and empowerment of citizens through the delegation of authority, accountability and resources [4]. Whereas other conceptual frameworks were employed such as the general views held by many that: Decentralization is a means to local democratization through bringing government closer to the people, with increased political participation and more accountable and responsive local government [5,6,7,8]. Indeed, the theoretical underpinnings of the establishment of the local government system in Ghana, the District Assemblies (DAs) and the Unit Committees (UCs) can be gauged by the tenets of the landmark in the global development that is Agenda 21, the United Nations' action programme for sustainable development.

In practice, this means that local people (citizens) themselves generate, share, analyze, prioritize, and contribute to, or control, decision-making [9]. In addition, that it enhances local democracy and leads to government that is more responsive were used to investigate citizen participation in the decentralization process in Ghana with attention to the Central Tongu district of the Volta Region.

It can be seen that while development is the ultimate goal of every country, good governance with its democratic attributes is the strategy universally accepted to achieve development. Decentralization process (local governance) in this context could mean adopting relevant methods and engaging the local people (citizens) in decision-making to achieve local level development. Local governance (decentralization process) therefore means governance of a people (citizen participation) in a particular place. The citizens here comprise a people who have cultural and geographical connotations (the ordinary people, traditional authorities, unit committee members, assembly members and the members of parliament in the Central Tongu District). In order to attain the goal of decentralization process, development strategies must be situated in a context. It therefore very necessary that local stakeholders and government/modern development actors (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Regional Coordinating Council, District Assembly and Head of Decentralized Departments in the district) work together to achieve local development instead of one-sided view of modernization theory.

Government institutions are very important in promoting good governance at the local level if they mediate through local stakeholders, their elected representatives and the traditional authorities. Local stakeholders and government institutions are to facilitate organization of the citizens to take active part in the decentralization process, which has development as its

goal. Government officials especially the District Chief Executive then become partners in development playing supportive roles and a link between the local people (citizens) and the central government. This means that government officials are only to offer advice and suggestions but the local people (citizens) determine the space of development.

As a force for mobilizing the citizens for productive efforts the assembly members, unit committee members, and traditional authorities are conduits, through which the purpose to empower the citizens at the local level can be achieved. Local stakeholders and government institutions are partners in the decentralization process. This realization should lead to collaboration between the two.

Government officials are only to offer advice and suggestions but it is local people (citizens) that should determine the pace of development. Interaction between government authorities and the local stakeholders lead to efficient governance since both parties learn from each other, while the local citizens learn more about democracy, government officials learn about the citizens. In their interaction, government officials and local stakeholders should as much as possible be transparent and accountable to one another. In this case, the citizens are put in the knowledge of choices available and state of affairs, with feedbacks in all cases, regarding legitimate concerns and explanations on all matters, which are knowledge for understanding and knowledge for action.

Empowering the citizens and ownership means the flow of power from government institutions especially the District Assembly through their elected representatives (Assembly members, unit committee members and traditional authorities to the people (citizens)). The citizens may exercise choices of their own free will, decide on what they need and not government officials (DCE) providing what they think the people (citizen) need. In short, government officials at the district level (district assembly) are to help establish structures that would provide for the empowerment of the citizens to assume greater responsibility for decision-making, election of their representatives and mobilization of funds for local development.

Through local (Citizen) participation, community members express their needs, problems and priorities without which development programmes and projects are likely to fail (Adarkwa and Diaw, 1999) cited by [10]. While participation has been recognized as essential in the development process in Ghana, this is not likely to happen without the following conditions (Kendie, 1997) cited by [10]: Real commitment of politicians and administrators to allow communities to control critical decision-making issues such as needs assessment; Strong civil society organizations able to mobilize the people to demand both participation and the rendering of quality services by state institutions; Open political structures at all levels and Participation not being only instrumental but also an end in itself.

The only contravention of Kendie's position to Ghana's decentralization process is his belief that there is the need for open political structures at all levels for local development to thrive. However, his assertion of citizen participation in the development process (decentralization process) cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore well

considering in investigating whether Central Tongu District citizens participate in Ghana's decentralization process towing party lines and what factors affect their participation in the decentralization process in Ghana.

Citizen participation in decision-making varies and differs from one context and conception. Arnstein (1969) cited by [11] distill eight levels of citizen participation ranging from nonparticipation to citizen power. To Arnstein the levels include:

**Manipulation:** places people on advisory boards to rubberstamp decisions; to educate them to the agency perspective; distorting the participation into a public relations ploy.

**Therapy:** engages citizens in numerous activities, under the guise of citizen involvement in planning/decision-making, but where experts subject the citizens to 'clinical group therapy' to cure them, rather than fix the original problem.

**Informing:** provides information that is one way to the citizens, or too late to really affect decisions and fails to achieve real input; news media, pamphlets, response to inquiries, and information giving (not exchange) meetings are frequent forms of one-way communication.

**Consultation:** involves citizens in a significant manner, but is a sham if there are no assurances that their input will be fully incorporated in the decisions, or the full range of options are considered; frequent forms are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings.

**Placation:** represents tokenism if those previously excluded from power remain a numerical minority on the board and/or are not accountable to any constituency in the community; another form is giving only powers of advice or planning, but not to turn them into actual decisions.

**Partnership:** represents real citizen participation when citizens and governments agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through joint structures, and neither partner can unilaterally change the agreement; implicit in this is that citizens have access to resources (time, staff, information) comparable to the government partner.

**Delegated Power:** occurs when through negotiations between government and citizens, citizens gain the dominant decision making position on programs affecting them to insure accountability to the client's needs.

**Citizen Control:** falls short of the rhetoric of absolute control, but the intent is that citizens actually have managerial and policy control and can set the conditions under which government can alter the institution or program.

In a similar discourse [12] states effective method in involving citizens in public discussion include public hearings, special open meetings (town meetings), opportunities to speak at regular meetings, citizen advisory boards, mails in coupons, coffee-house conversations, surveys, web-sites/e-mail, visits to local civic groups, visits to neighbourhood associations and contact initiated by citizens.

The ILGS, (2006: 41 & 42) provides that the existing modes of participation that individuals/ communities participate in local governance and influence decision-making in Ghana today include: Attend public meetings or public hearings, participate in elections (voice) and

referenda, community meetings, public education and communication campaigns, pre-budget consultations between local governments and citizenry, community level group meetings that target the membership of a particular targeted group (market women, drivers, dressmakers, etc.) Focus group discussions, annual meetings and conferences, use of the media both print and electronic, task forces and ad hoc committees of local governments, direct advice and support from councilors, lobbying, action planning; a process of carefully structured collaborative activities in which all sections of the community work closely with specialists from different disciplines to deal with planning and sanitation issues.

In survey conducted by the Economic Commission for Africa on the topic ICTS for effective decentralization; A pilot study in selected (Woredas) (Districts) in Ethiopia, Dr. Assefu Admassie [13] listed the following factors that affect effective decentralization: Lack of standardization, shortage of skilled manpower/labour force, the educational level of the employees, poor data acquisition and storage, lack of analytical skills of employees, poor infrastructural development, poor horizontal and vertical communication and inadequate public private partnership.

In another survey on factors for determining effective decentralization in "allsubjects4you" it was observed that the size of organization, history of organization, management philosophy, availability of managers, costliness of decision, and rate of change in organization and nature of activities are factors that determine the effectiveness of decentralization. In a closely related survey on the topic "Local government administration and challenges of rural development in Nigeria" [14] enumerated seven problems that affect local government administration in Nigeria. These include finance, inadequacy of skilled workers, problems of participation and involvement, misplaced priority, general indiscipline and undue interference from central government officials. In summary, the factors affecting the success or failure of local governments or decentralization programmes are many and varied. The differences may stem from other factors: political, social, economic, cultural, geographical or historical.

## 1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine key factors that affect the implementation of the decentralization process in the Central Tongu District (CTD). The objectives for the paper is to identify the key factors affecting the participation of the citizens in the decentralization process in Central Tongu District, and make appropriate recommendations.

## 1.2. Research Question

What are the factors affecting citizen participation in the decentralization process in the Central Tongu District?

## 1.3. Research Design

The research design is a case study. Case study design as observed by [15] is employed to gain an in-depth

understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than the outcome, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation; insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice and future research. Case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system [16]. In a similar, discourse [17] explains a case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context).

#### 1.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The population for the research was residents of the Central Tongu District in the Volta region of Ghana, especially the voter population in the district. Generally, the purposive sampling procedure was employed. However, in cases where the researcher had to choose instead of targeting a whole population (e.g. 4 assembly members from 42) the convenient method was employed in the selection of the respondents.

The district was divided into 5 zones. However, all persons in the target groups considered critical to the research were interviewed either through interview or through questionnaire. In all, a total sample of 115 respondents was targeted for the research. 15 respondents were interviewed and 100 respondents had questionnaires.

#### 1.5. Research Instruments

A self-developed interview protocol and questionnaires were utilized for data collection. The interview protocol was used to elicit information from government appointees and staff of the Central Tongu District Assembly, heads of decentralized departments of the district assembly, both elected and appointed assembly members and unit committee members. The interviewees were asked same questions irrespective of position or status in the district. All the items of the interview protocol were open-ended questions that were based on the research question.

The questionnaire gathered data from citizens of voting age, 18 years and above, who are residents in the CTD. The questionnaire instruments consisted mostly of close-ended (Likert's Scale) and two open-ended items. The validity of the interview protocol and the questionnaire were established through pilot tests.

#### 1.6. Data Collection Procedure

The collection of the data for the research was done in two phases. The first phase was interviewing public and civil stakeholders and some of the assembly members and unit committee members in the decentralization process in the district over a six-week period. In this phase of the fieldwork, interviews were held with key staff such as the District Chief Executive (DCE), District Coordinating Director (DCD), District Finance Officer (DFO), and other Heads of the Decentralized Departments in the

District, and some Assembly Members (AMs) and some Unit Committee Members (UCMs). In all 14 respondents were interviewed.

The second phase was the administration of questionnaire to residents in the Central Tongu District. Four research assistants were employed together with the researcher. Originally, 20 questionnaires were given to each together with the researcher.

#### 1.7. Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered for the research using interviews and questionnaires. The qualitative data from interviews conducted were analyzed manually by making summaries of the views of the respondents and supporting these relevant quotations that spelt out the views of the respondents. In the quantitative data, questionnaires, the data were coded, graded and fed into the Scientific Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16 for windows. Five-point and four-point Likert type scales were used to solicit the level of agreement on issues pertaining to the study. A simple percentage was used to analyze the quantitative data obtained. The findings were compared to the responses from the interviews.

#### 1.8. Procedure for Data Analysis

The factors affecting citizen participation in the decentralization process in the Central Tongu District were considered from three perspectives: factors emanating from the district assembly, factors based on the people's representatives notably the assembly members and the unit committee members and factors involving the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the citizens. The analysis of the factors was based on the forced choice system already identified in the literature review and the pre-study survey.

There shall be a District chief Executive for every district who shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of not less than two-thirds majority of members of the Assembly present and voting at the meeting (Ghana's [18]: Article 243 (1)). Items 38&39 asked the respondents to indicate whether they believe the non-performance of the district assembly to the expectation of the citizenry can be attributed to non-election and non-accountability of DCE to the electorate. The findings in Table 1 depict that the majority of the respondents agreed that non-election of the DCE and him not accountable to the electorates in the district to very large extent affect the performance of the district assembly. From Table 1, 53 respondents representing 58.3% agreed that the District Assembly (AD) is not functioning well because the DCE is not accountable to the electorate, however, 17(18.7%) disagreed and 21( 23.1%) were uncertain. In item 2, 55 respondents representing 60.5% share the view that the DA is not performing to expectation of the citizens because the electorate does not elect the DCE, yet 16 (17.8%) and 20 (22.0%) disagreed and uncertain respectively.

**Table 1. Factors that affect the decentralization process in Central Tongu District**

ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	U(%)	D (%)	TOTAL (%)
1. The DA is not functioning well because the DCE is not accountable to the electorate	31(34.1)	22(24.2)	21(23.1)	17(18.7)	91(100.0)
2. The DA is not performing to expectation of the citizens because the DCE is not elected by the electorate	23(25.3)	32(35.2)	20(22.0)	16(17.8)	91(100.0)
3. The DA will be better off if the entire membership of the assembly is elected rather than the current arrangement when one-third is appointed	30(33.0)	33(36.3)	19(20.9)	9(9.9)	91(100.0)
4. The non-payment of regular allowances to AM is not helping the decentralization process	35(38.5)	40(44.5)	11(12.1)	5(5.5)	91(100.0)
5. The non-payment of regular allowance to UCM is not helping the decentralization process	32(35.5)	27(30.0)	18(20.0)	13(14.4)	90(100.0)
6. The non-functioning of UCs is due to too many UCs operating in any one area council	27(30.0)	46(50.0)	11(12.2)	6(6.7)	90(100.0)
7. The inability of the DA to generate internal funds is due to the lack of awareness of citizens of their obligations	46(51.1)	27(30.0)	6(6.6)	11(12.2)	92(100)
8. The AMs, TAs and UCMs of the DA compete rather cooperate with one another	15(16.5)	24(26.4)	34(37.0)	18(19.8)	91(100.0)
9. The policies of any ruling government affect the decentralization process to a greater extent	23(25.6)	39(43.3)	20(22.2)	8(8.9)	90(100.0)
10. The apathy of citizens of non-involvement in the decentralization process is due to lack of information or education by the stakeholders of the programme	55(60.4)	24(26.4)	7(7.7)	5(5.5)	91(100.0)

In Item 3 respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree that the district assembly will be better off if the entire membership of the assembly is elected rather than the current arrangement when one-third of the assembly is elected. According to the analysis from Table 1 more than 70% of the respondents agreed that the district assembly would be better off if the entire membership of the assembly is elected rather than the current arrangement where one-third is appointed. Less than 10% disagreed and approximately 20% were uncertain.

Items 4 & 5 asked the respondents whether they think the non-payment of regular allowances to AMs and UCMs is contributory factor to the realization of the objectives of the decentralization process. Responses from Item 41 shows that 75 respondents representing 83.3% agreed the non-payment of regular allowances to AMs is not helping the decentralization process, while 5 (5.5%) and 11 (12.1%) disagreed and uncertain respectively. Item 42 on the other hand shows 59 respondents representing 65.2%, 13 respondents representing 14.4% and 18 respondents representing 20.0% agreed, disagreed and uncertain respectively that non-payment of allowances to UCMs is not helping the decentralization process. Relating the findings from items 4 & 5 bring to the fore the relationship between AMs and UCMs in decentralization process are similar but not identical therefore, majority of the respondents agreed non-payment of allowances to both affect the decentralization process.

Item 6 on the functioning of the UCs reveal that majority of the respondents acknowledged the non-functioning of unit committees is due to too many unit committees operating in any one area council or electoral area. There was an eighty percent agreement by the respondents as against twenty percent who either disagreed or uncertain. The results show 27 respondents representing 30.0% strongly agreed, 46 (50.1%) agreed, 11(12.2%) uncertain and 6 (6.7%) disagreed respectively that the non-functioning of unit committees is due to too many unit committees operating in any one electoral area.

Item 7 shows the various responses to how the respondents agree or disagree that the inability of district assembly to generate internal funds is due to lack of awareness of citizens of their obligations. The data analysis reveals about 80% of the respondents agreed that the non-functioning of UCs is due to too many UCs operating in any one-area council and less than 20% disagreed. From the results 46 (51.1%) strongly agreed, 27 (30%) agreed, 6 (6.7%) uncertain and 11 (12.2%) disagreed respectively.

One factor to affect the realization of the objectives and the goal of decentralization process is the understanding that stakeholders are to cooperate with one another rather than compete with one another. Respondents were asked whether AMs, TAs and UCMs of the District Assembly compete rather than cooperate with one another. The analysis shows that 39 respondents representing 41.1% agreed while 18, (19.8%) and 34, (37.0%) disagreed and uncertain respectively. Item 9 shows the views of the respondents whether they agree or disagree that the policies of any ruling government affect the decentralization process largely. The breakdown of responses is 62 respondents representing 70.9% agreed, 8, (8.9%) disagreed and 20, (22.2%) were uncertain. The results indicated more than three-fifth of the targeted population believe the policies of any ruling government affect the decentralization programme while a little over one-fifth has no idea and less than one-fifth disagreed.

Item 10 presents the views of respondents on whether the apathy of citizens of non-involvement in the decentralization process is due to lack of information or education by the stakeholders of the programme. Out of the 91 responses received 79 respondents representing 86.8% agreed while 5 (5.5%) disagreed and 7, (7.7%) were uncertain. The results indicated majority of the targeted population believed that one factor that affects the decentralization process is lack of education or adequate information to the citizens on the demands and details of the decentralization process implemented by the government of Ghana since its inception in 1988.

**Table 2. Other Factors Respondents Observed to Affect the Decentralization Process in Central Tongu District**

Responses	Number of responses	Percent (%)
Low level of education of stakeholders	7	11.1
Lack /inadequate funds for development	6	9.5
Absence of access road network	6	9.5
Over politicization of issues	7	11.1
Insufficient/lack of qualified staff	6	9.5
Absence of commitment of stakeholders	4	6.3
Vastness of the district	5	7.9
Non-involvement of Traditional Authorities	3	4.7
Favoritisms, ethnicity and selfishness	4	6.3
Lack of logistics at District Assembly	5	7.9
Centralization of financial powers at Accra	3	4.7
Lack of cooperation among stakeholders	3	4.7
Non-involvement of communities in Awards of contract	4	6.3
Total	63	99.5

From Table 2 the respondents identified other factors that affected decentralization process in the North Tongu District. In order of magnitude 7 respondents representing 11.1%, each identified 'Low level of education of stakeholders' and 'Over politicization of issues' as some factors that affect the ultimate realization of the decentralization process in North Tongu District. The responses further indicated 'Lack/inadequate funds for development' 6, (9.5%), 'Absence of access road network' 6 (9.5%) 'Insufficient/lack of qualified staff' 6 (9.5%), 'Lack of logistics at District Assembly' and 'Vastness of the district' 5 (7.9%) each. Others include Absence of commitment of stakeholders, favoritisms, ethnicity and selfishness and Non-involvement of communities in awarding contract 4 (6.3%) each and Centralization of financial powers, Non-involvement of Traditional Authorities and Lack of cooperation among stakeholders 3(4.7%) were also mentioned as other factors that affected effective decentralization of the district.

In the interview survey, respondents were asked 'what factor(s)/ issue(s) affect(s) the implementation of the decentralization process in the Central Tongu District. A summary of the responses to the question show that factors such as lack of education (low literacy rate of the citizens) financial constraints stemming from inadequate funds from the central government and inability of the district assembly to mobilize sufficient funds, human resources comprising competency, quality and availability, and logistics to work with. Other factors mentioned were irregular information flow, non-utilization of investment opportunity in the districts and politicization of issues at the assembly. To support the above one respondent made this statement:

To my best knowledge, I could say most of the people at the Assembly are linked to political parties; therefore, they politicized issues at the district assembly. Again, when it comes to the appointment of people to positions at the district, they do not see people who are capable and can perform at those positions. The decentralization process should be devoid of politics, we need to see the

capabilities of people rather than using political eye to select or place people at positions at the district assembly.

The factors that were identified by the respondents to affecting the effective implementation of the decentralization process in the Central Tongu District are many and varied.

Table 3 shows the various responses to how the factors that affect the decentralization process can be addressed to achieving the goal and objectives of the concept. 16 responses representing 33.3% of the respondents indicated education related solutions. One respondent stated 'the government to provide community radio stations in each district to educate the citizens in their local dialects on government policies including the decentralization programme'. Another said, assembly members should be well educated on their roles so as they also educate the citizens. 10 respondents representing 20.8% indicated improvement in the funds that come to the assembly for the execution of the decentralization programme. "Assembly members should be allocated part of the district common funds (Assembly Member Common Fund) as in the case of Members of Parliament", proposed by one respondent. Funds should be distributed evenly among the electoral areas; the district should make judicious use of its funds for infrastructural development in the district to enhance the decentralization process were some of the financial propositions identified. Respondents also observed if politicians stay away from the decentralization process, experienced and seasoned civil servants employed at the district assemblies and adequate logistics supply to the districts to work with, it will promote the realization of the ideals of the decentralization process. Other solutions identified that constituted the 16.25% of the responses were: the Central Tongu District should be re-demarcated or split into two districts and large electoral areas split into smaller units for easy administration, Unit Committee Members and Assembly Members should be made mobile and traditional authorities should be more involved in the decision-making process in the district.

**Table 3. Suggested Solutions to Factors that Affect the Decentralization Process in Central Tongu District by Respondents**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percent (%)
Education related issues	16	33.3
Finance related issues	10	20.8
Political related issues	4	8.3
Planning and commitment	3	6.25
Human resource/logistics	4	8.3
Re-demarcation: district and electoral areas	3	6.25
Others	8	16.25
Total	48	99.8

## 2. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study show that effective implementation of the decentralization process in the Central Tongu District is affected by a number of factors. These include the office of the DCE and how the DCE is selected, Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members of the district assembly and the motivation given them, internal funds mobilization, cooperation among stakeholders, education given to the citizenry and others suggested by respondents. From the findings there appear to be growing consensus among the respondents that DCE must be accountable to the people. This is supported by 53 (58.8%) who agreed that the district assembly is not functioning well because the DCE is not accountable to the electorates. Again, 55 (60.5%) agreed that the district assembly is not performing to the expectation of the citizens because the DCE is not elected by the electorates. Because DCEs are not performing to the expectation and not accountable, citizens do not feel a need to give the necessary support in terms of paying taxes, etc. This suggests the DCEs have lost credibility and cannot lead the District Assembly to mobilize support for development agenda for the districts.

The result further implies the citizens wish the electorates elected the DCE of the district to make him more accountable to the electorates. Interestingly, approximately 20% of the respondents could not agree or disagree on the issues. The findings, therefore, question the constitutional provision that upholds that "there shall be a District Chief Executive for every district who shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of not less than two-thirds majority of members of the Assembly present and voting at the meeting" (Ghana's [18]: Article 243 (1)). This revelation could mean that majority of the people believe there are structural defects in the present decentralization programme of Ghana. In contrast, it could mean that the people seem not to understand the reasons for the appointment of the DCEs by the President of Ghana. Besides, what are the real expectations of the citizens that DCEs are not meeting by their current performances? These issues call for further investigation.

The results further revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the district assembly would be better off if the entire membership of the assembly is elected rather than the current arrangement where one-third is appointed. The results therefore, question the

constitutional provision of the decentralization process. Article 242 that establishes that:

A District Assembly shall consist of the following members -(a) one person from each local government electoral area within the district elected by universal adult suffrage; (b) the member or members of Parliament from the constituencies that fall within the area of authority of the District Assembly as members without the right to vote; (c) the District Chief Executive of the district; and (d) other members not being more than thirty percent of all the members of the District Assembly, appointed by the President in consultation with the traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district [18].

The results revealed that the non-payment of regular allowances to AMs and UCMs largely affect the realization of the goal and objectives of the decentralization process in the CTD. This is supported by nearly 75 (82%) of the respondents who agreed that the non-payment of regular allowances to AMs affect the decentralization process and 59 (65.2%) agreed on it for UCMs. The findings signal that district assemblies could generate more funds if the UCMs educate the citizens on their obligations. This is confirmed by over 80% of the respondents who agreed that the inability of district assembly to generate internal funds is lack of awareness of citizens of their obligations. Such lack of awareness seems to emerge from a cyclic disorder in the implementation of the decentralization process. This is overt in the finding that the citizens have lost interest in meetings because those meetings do not address issues considered relevant and so AMs and UCMs do not have opportunities to educate citizens on their (Citizen's) obligations.

The results further show that majority of the respondents agreed that the non-functioning of Unit Committees is due to too many Unit Committees operating in any one-area council. As such, efforts to reduce UCs could strengthen them and might be useful. However, such efforts will fail, if not supported by a capacity programme that is useful in helping UCs to educate communities. The result corroborates the electoral reforms carried by the Electoral Commission of Ghana for the 2010 District Assembly and Unit Committee Elections. "Every electoral area now has only one unit. The number of unit committees has been reduced to the number of electoral areas" (Electoral Commission of Ghana, District Assembly and Unit Committee Elections 2010).

One factor to affect the realization of the objectives and the goal of decentralization process is the understanding

that stakeholders are to cooperate with one another rather than compete with one another. Respondents were asked whether AMs, TAs and UCMs of the District Assembly compete rather than cooperate with one another. The outcome reveals there were varied views expressed by the respondents. The varied views expressed by respondents could be explained by the various leadership styles exhibited by the stakeholders, the ideological perspective of each stakeholder and how they understand the decentralization concept as against that of the respondents. The results indicated that more than three-fifth of the targeted population believe the policies of any ruling government affect the decentralization programme while a little over one-fifth has no idea and less than one-fifth disagreed. In addition, the results show another factor that affects the decentralization process is lack of education or adequate information to the citizens on the demands and details of the decentralization process implemented by the government of Ghana since its inception in 1988.

Finally, the study identified other factors that affect the decentralization process in the CTD. These include: low level of education of stakeholders, over-politicization of issues, lack/inadequate funds for development, absence of access road network, insufficient/lack of qualified staff, lack of logistics at district assembly, vastness of the district, absence of commitment of stakeholders, favoritisms, ethnicity and selfishness and non-involvement of communities in awarding contract, centralization of financial powers, and non-involvement of Traditional Authorities in decision-making at the assembly. Thus, this work supports Wunsch (2001) as cited by [3] when he asserted that representative government, administrative capacity, and the legitimacy of local structures, the contribution of civil society (citizens) and developing a local political process; accountability and responsiveness might measure the impact of decentralization on local government in Ghana.

The findings show that respondents believe the decentralization programme will be successful if a number of factors are considered in the implementation of the decentralization process in the CTD. These include education related issues, finance related issues, political related issues, planning and commitment of stakeholders, human resource/logistics, re-demarcation of the district and electoral areas. On education related issues, government has to provide community radio stations in each district to educate the citizens on government policies and programmes (including the decentralization programme) in their local dialects. Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members should be well educated on their roles so that they also educate the citizens. Finance related issues include creation of Member of Assembly Common Fund (MACF) in parallel to Member of Parliament Common Fund (MPCF), and funds from District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) should be distributed fairly among the electoral areas and the district make judicious use of its funds for infrastructural development in the district to enhance the decentralization process. On political related issues, respondents observed that if politicians stay away from the decentralization process, experienced and seasoned civil servants employed at the district assemblies and adequate logistics supply to the districts to work with will promote the

realization of the ideals of the decentralization process. Other solutions identified that constituted 16.25% of the responses were the Central Tongu District should be re-demarcated or split into two districts and large electoral areas split into smaller units for easy administration, Unit Committee Members and Assembly Members should be made mobile and traditional authorities should be more involved in the decision-making process in the district.

## 2.1. Findings

The study results show that there are a number of factors, which affect the participation of citizenry in the decentralization process. Those factors identified include:

1. Lack of accountability by DCEs, elected and appointed representatives such as AMs and UCMs to the electorates.
2. Ineffectiveness of UCs. UCMs do not organize the citizens in their units
3. Lack of financial incentives for elected representatives to coordinate activities in their electoral areas.
4. Lack of capacity to mobilize funds at the district level. The District has not demonstrated ability to generate funds to support development.
5. Other stakeholders (DCEs, AMs and UCMs) do not consult the 'ordinary' citizens in planning development projects.
6. Political factors: the policy of ruling governments and politicization of issues at the district assembly affect the implementation of the decentralization programme in the district. These issues have being a problem for all citizens participating in the decentralization at all times.
7. The low level of education of majority of stakeholders is problem to realizing the objectives of the decentralization process in the CTD.

The study results show that one issue respondents considered could promote citizen participation in the decentralization process is the creation of Assembly Member Common Fund (AMCF) or Electoral Area Common Fund (EACF). This, they believe, if created and made operational would enable AMs and UCMs reach the electorates and the citizens more effectively.

## 2.2. Conclusion

Decentralization process is essentially about public administration that proclaims local governance. Ghana's decentralization programme has clearly demonstrated, made significant and commendable progress in institutionalizing public administration and good governance. Ghana has been practicing either social or liberal forms of government for the past twenty years since the coming into force of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana. Even though the decentralization process started earlier on under a military regime in 1988, it has taken firm roots. Ghanaians have generally accepted and embraced the decentralization programme. The 170 districts of Ghana, Central Tongu District inclusive, are making frantic efforts against structural defects, financial constraints, and other teething problems coupled with mal-functioning of certain institutions and stakeholders, in realizing the goal

and objectives of the decentralization process. Central Tongu District has created and institutionalized the various institutions and engaged stakeholders in promoting the decentralization programme in the district. The institutions and the stakeholders include the District Assembly, the office of the District Chief Executive, the decentralized departments of the assembly, the elected and the appointed members of the assembly, unit committee members, and the citizens. These institutions and stakeholders are supposed to deepen and widen the views, understandings and scope of citizens' participation in decision-making and local governance. The findings have revealed that much is still yet to be achieved. There is a fair understanding of the decentralization process in the district. However, decentralization process has not provided the necessary impetus for the citizens to participate fully in the process. The citizens have not been effectively involved in the decentralization process, except during local elections. These issues have been related to certain factors. Those factors include selection and accountability of some of the stakeholders, for example DCEs, lack of funds for development in the district, and ineffectiveness of UCs.

### 3. Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for possible implementation:

1. There is the need for some more education in the Decentralization Process for all citizenry.
2. District Assembly Staff, Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members should be given education on ways to effectively involve their constituents in the decentralization process.
3. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should establish monitoring mechanisms to assess the extent citizens' engagement/participation in the decentralization process in the CTD and beyond CTD.
4. That the decentralization philosophy calls for a working relationship between the government institutions and the local stakeholders and to be bottom-up approach instead of top-down approach, therefore opportunity must be given to all to participate in the programme especially the traditional authorities. The implementation of such policy options might lead to changes in local governance, which can change citizens' views of the decentralization process.
5. There is need for some re-organization of the UCs. Re-organized UCs should be supported with small Grant Schemes to help them coordinate governance in the local units and DCEs and AMs should have regular consultations with their people as prescribed in the decentralization process.
6. There should be a system of selecting DCEs, which references accountability to the local area.
7. Create a fund, Assembly Member Common Fund (AMCF) or Electoral Area Common Fund (EACF) parallel to Member of Parliament Common Fund (MPCF) to speed up developments in the units.

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