

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION (NCCE)
TOWARDS THE CONSOLIDATION OF GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY IN GHANA:
A REVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND TOPICAL ISSUES*****Samuel Mojom and Vincent Agyei**

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Abstract

The scope of civic engagement has expanded to cover many more forms of participation, like community involvement, as well as highlighting the relevance of unconventional civic actions such as demonstrations and protests. It has been established that the multi-dimensional understanding of civic engagements must reshape how we understand, investigate, and practice civic education in the political space. The extant literature has been preoccupied with theoretical and empirical discourse on the existence and relevants of civic education institutions, as well as focused on questions like; what are the benefits of keeping an educated or well-informed citizenry? And what are the possible threats posed by civic ignorance and apathy among the citizenry? Howbeit, the systematic studies on establishing the key methodologies employ by these civic education institutions are somewhat few. In the Ghanaian context, citizens have expressed mixed feelings on the need for the creation and operation of the National Commission for Civic Education. To help fill the knowledge gap, this current study sought to ascertain the predominant methods utilized by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in providing civic education to the general public as well as to investigate the topical issues that dominate their discourse in Ghana. The study adopted the descriptive research design and the use of a survey instrument to collect quantitative data from 145 sampled respondents, selected with the multi-stage probability sampling technique. Data was handled quantitatively using the IBM SPSS version 21. The study established that the NCCE utilizes diverse civic education methods in reaching-out to the people of Ghana, of which, the use of the community information centers and the in-person visitation of places of worship by its officials, dominate. It again found that political issues comprising voter education, education on the provisions of the 1992 Constitution, fundamental human rights as well as political participation, respectively, dominate the discussions of the NCCE in Ghana. These findings serve as empirical guide to the officials of the NCCE to effectively utilize variety of methods to intensify its civic education, especially, the use of the internet and social media. It also to a larger extent, guide the NCCE to collaborate effectively with other institutions like the mass media, religious bodies and the school in the provision of civic education in Ghana. Since majority of the people receive civic education through the mass media outlets, a further qualitative research should be conducted to understand how the NCCE can effectively collaborate with the mass media to consolidate Ghana's democratic gains at the local level.

Keywords: Contribution, Grassroot democracy, Civic education, National Commission for Civic Education, Strategies, Topical issues.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary democracies where popular participation in political affairs and the wishes of the masses thrive, the need for an enlightened citizenry through political education cannot be overemphasized. Obviously, democracy cannot thrive in the absence of effective civic education. Admittedly, the survival of democracy should be accompanied by massive civic education for the citizens of every nation (Kaunda, 2018). To this end, the survival of political institutions and proper functioning democracies at all levels require a well socialized and motivated citizenry charged with the needed political information and opportunities. This current study thereby builds on the argument that democratic tenets that accommodate varied views and opinions, become necessary for the survival of modern states. Mihaylov (2020) intimates that citizens must show commitment and preparedness to own the political system at all levels as well as get fully involved in socio-political activities happening around them, especially, at the grassroots level. He puts grassroots democracy into proper perspective and opined that it focuses on core democratic themes like equality, participation, consensus building, and deliberation quality at a community or organization level.

Unlike the formalized and purely legislated systems of democratic governance operating at the national level, grassroots democracy is basically experienced at local levels. The decentralized nature of grassroots democracy helps to empower local people and increase accountability of local government authorities. It also makes it easier for the local people to capture and own the political system at the local levels (Wang & Yao, 2007). In this current study, grassroots democracy is operationalized to mean when the local people are fully enlightened through civic education to appreciate the essence of political participation at the local levels. This should manifests in getting actively involved in local level elections, participating in communal works to support sanitation and environmental cleanliness, willingness to pay taxes and rates to support local development, understanding basic constitutional provisions as well as respecting the rights of others. We thus concur with Branson (1998) assertion that democracies function efficiently and most effectively when the people share in the philosophies and ideologies of the government. This he maintained, forms the basis of critical reflection and understanding of the political processes. To further narrow the discourse downwards to Ghana, we reiterate the imperative of educating and equipping the citizenry with the requisite civic knowledge and skills to consolidate Ghana's fledgling democracy in the sub-region. For democratic governance to thrive, there is the need to imbibe in the citizenry civic virtues,

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knowledge and skills so they could participate in the socio-economic and political development of the country (Kuma, 2011). The goal of civic education may be understood in a narrower sense, as an acquisition of basic knowledge about a constitutional framework and the democratic institutions and processes. Whereas in a broader understanding, the focus of civic education is more on the acquisition of core competences that promotes participation in a democracy through social learning as well as political socialization (Vasiljevic, 2009). After independence in 1957, successive governments in Ghana have tried to rally the citizens behind them through one form of civic education or the other. Shillington (1992) posits that the Convention People's Party (CPP) government that occupied the realm of power between 1957 and 1966 established the Institute of Public Education, which later became the Institute of Adult Education and the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba. The rationale is to promote patriotism and nationalism among Ghanaians. For instance, In 1958, the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement (GYPM) was founded to widen the school curriculum to include political education which was intended to produce conscious and responsible citizens. The National Liberation Council (NLC) junta also established the flagship Centre for Civic Education which was under the Chairmanship of Dr. K.A. Busia. In 1982, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) announced the setting up of a National Commission for Democracy (NCD) charged with PNDC Law 42, to provide political education as well as chart the roadmap on participatory democracy Ghana (Shillington, 1992).

The 1992th Republican Constitution of Ghana further consolidated political socialization by establishing a statutory body called the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to provide civic and political education to Ghanaians. The NCCE makes civic and public education an important strategy for creating awareness on the main values of democratic governance. It is also to help instill the spirit of patriotism and enhancing popular participation in governance at all levels (NCCE, 2017 Annual Report). In this direction, Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey maintain that "civic education formed a core of the mandate given to the NCCE to educate the citizenry concerning their rights and responsibilities as enjoined by the fundamental laws of the land. It is also believed that the NCCE has performed this constitutional mandate since it was founded in 1992" (2015, p.631). This notwithstanding, the extant literature somewhat presents theoretical and empirical findings on the existence and essence of the NCCE, with little done on systematically establishing the models utilized by this instrumental body in getting the people informed to deepen democracy in Ghana which forms the primary goal of our current study to fill the gap.

Statement of the Problem

The debate on civic education remains a subject for empirical investigations now and beyond because it is repeatedly confronted with new setbacks to manage key risks of the democratic system. Low voter turnouts and growing political apathy among young people are pushing policymakers to consider the key roles of civic education in democracy and to make useful suggestions for improving civic education structures (Yoldas, 2015). Civic education programmes and activities can have meaningful and relatively long-lasting effects in terms of increasing political information, feelings of

empowerment and political engagement (Finkel, 2014; Yoldas, 2015). In its classical sense, Boateng (1996) underscored the need for an institutionalized body to perform this task of civic education, which ought to be state sponsored, but as much as possible, be independent and free of governmental control. He further maintain that the African community have rather not done much to develop an institutional framework to guarantee the rights and freedoms of the people. The Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana provided for the creation of the National Commission for Civic Education in Chapter 19. "There shall be established by Act of Parliament within six months after Parliament first meets after coming into force of this Constitution, a National Commission for Civic Education in this Chapter referred to as the Commission" (Republic of Ghana, 1992). The NCCE was then established by the National Commission for Civic Education Act, 1993 (Act 452) and has been empowered to inculcate a culture of democracy in the Ghanaian people through sensitization and participation (NCCE, 2016).

The NCCE has the mandate to contribute towards the attainment and development of democratic culture in Ghana. As a matter of constitutional demand, they must work hard to consolidate good governance and democracy in Ghana at all levels. The Commission has the potential to contribute meaningfully towards citizens' participation in the political system for various reasons. In fact, the NCCE has a national appeal and for that matter, it is familiar with the national and local issues that demand immediate civic education remedies. In substantiating their claim, Abudu and Fuseini (2014) assert that "since the NCCE came into being, it has had a nationwide presence through its regional and district offices, which provides a platform that enables it to reach out to every community" (p.252).

However, it is observed that the commission's concentration on grassroots democracy is on the low side. Even though the NCCE was established to help in the promotion of civic awareness and grassroots democracy in Ghana, available evidence suggests that it has not been on top of its responsibilities and has underperformed in this regard, hence, the persistent low voter turnouts in the District Level Elections (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014). Citizens exhibit apathy and are reluctant to take part in community service as they usually watch unconcerned and are always waiting for the central or local government to fix all their community problems. Again, media reportage over the years indicate that the Commission is not doing enough to promote grassroots democracy. The following reports support this view: "Ongoing District elections record low turnout" (www.ghanaweb.com, December 2019). "Ghana: District Assembly Election Ends, Records Low Turn Out" (Ghanaian Times, December 2019). Additionally, the roll-out of civic education programmes and activities seem not to be yielding intended results to improve citizen participation and awareness of civic issues around them. This has been seen through the continuous reduction in voter turnout and citizens' apathy towards political affairs at national and local levels (Kaunda, 2018). Even though the Commission has offices all over the country, its nationwide presence is not being felt. This is because it has been selective with its outreach programmes, a substantial proportion of public education programmes are organized for few identifiable groups. The NCCE must be guided by the peculiarity and diverse socio-cultural setting of societies in order to get everyone democratically enlightened. In actual sense, how

civic institutions like the NCCE should develop and operate must be determined by several factors. The policies and practices in civic education vary across socio-cultural contexts (Carretero *et al.*, 2015). With an overriding vision of becoming an effective and independent governance institution delivering civic education to all Ghanaians and working towards sustaining Ghana's democracy, the 2017 Annual Report of the NCCE highlighted that it has over the years been organizing civic education activities to reach out to the citizenry. Are these activities actually crafted and implemented religiously to promote grassroots democracy? What topic issues lead the agenda for social discourse? It is therefore imperative for this current study to investigate the activities of the NCCE to help provide empirical responses to the aforementioned.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows.

1. Ascertain the methods utilize by the NCCE to promote grass roots democracy in Ghana.
2. Investigate the issues that dominate the NCCE's public discussions with the people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of related theoretical underpinnings of the concept of political socialization and its role in grassroots democracy. Other empirical findings in the extant literature on the existence and operation of the National Commission for Civic Education in Ghana. The study employs the thematic literature review method to aid in exploring relevant areas to the stated research objectives.

Theoretical Literature

To better situate the study within existing theories, the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) popularized by Verba and Nie (1972) as well as the Concept of Political Socialization were adopted.

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM)

The CVM assumes that effective political participation is mostly exhibited by people with higher degrees of socio-economic resources like effective education or income than those who lack them. The model is actually seen as a very popular explanative model of political participation and democracy at large (Niworo *et al.*, 2016; Verba *et al.*, 1995). The view that effective education promotes political participation is also supported by Levinson (2011) who argued that students who receive effective civic education are more likely to vote and discuss political issues frequently, volunteer and work for community development and show confidence and the ability to speak publicly and share their concerns with people in authority. Finkel (2014) makes a further confirmation when he opined that "civic education can have meaningful and relatively long-lasting effects in terms of increasing political information, increasing feelings of empowerment, and mobilizing individuals" (p.169). Proponents of CVM hold that effective political participation is triggered by three basic factors namely; 1. Socio-economic resources such as effective education and income levels. 2. Engagement, which centers on a person's interest in politics

and the belief in one's capacity to influence political decisions. 3. Mobilization, which describes the stimulation or motivation resulting from interactions among persons in the social set up (Niworo *et al.*, 2016; Verba *et al.*, 1995).

Practicalizing the CVM in civic education: In planning civic education programmes by the NCCE, the aforementioned fundamental components of the CVM can be applied. With the first component, civic education can be used to induce participants to commit their time and resources towards local development. Secondly, the engagement component of the CVM shows how effective civic education by the NCCE can enlighten the people politically, thereby killing the apathy in them. By extension, increased political knowledge whips up the people's readiness to participate in political activities at all levels. Finally, mobilization determines how citizens' involvement in political activities is enhanced through social interactions and civic engagements by the NCCE. In a nutshell, the CVM is useful in determining the potency of all civic education programmes which are aimed at promoting political participation and grassroots democracy.

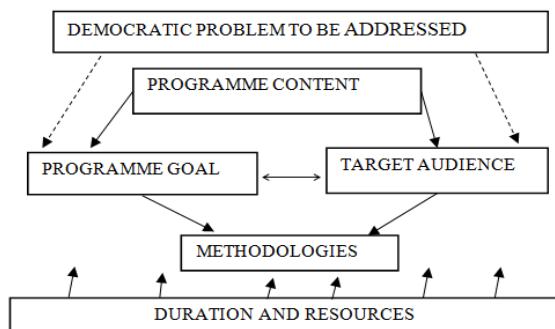
Concept of Political Socialization

Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) argued that "an understanding of citizenship education is better approached from a prior understanding of socialization in general and political socialization in particular" (p.633). Socialization is actually a holistic process of inculcating socio-cultural practices to a group of people. As the group participate in the transmission process, members who are politically active and conscious, take the opportunity to do the inculcation of the cherished political norms, values, principle and culture to the people. This side of the general socialization is referred to as political socialization (Brako & Ansah-Asante, 2018). Neundorf and Smets (2017) describes political socialization as the process by which citizens crystalize political identities, values and behaviour that remain relatively persistent throughout later life. To this end, political socialization is an idea of political habit formation and transmission. That is the totality of political attitudes, beliefs, norms as well as behaviours transmitted through generations and acquired by the individual members of the group. Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) classified political socialization as either latent (indirect) or manifest (direct). The authors maintain that latent political socialization talks about the transmission of non-political behaviours and attitudes which affect attitudes towards analogous roles and objects in the political system. The Manifest political socialization on the other hand, occurs when the individual learns explicitly about politics and political activities. Manifest political socialization is made up of political institutions; the behaviour expected of citizens and the respect accorded to political leaders as well as high level of political participation. Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey (2015) further observed that both categories of political socialization (i.e., latent and manifest political socialization) are carried out by certain agents of socialization, which include the family, schools, the mass media and the peer group among others. The kind of civic education undertaken by the NCCE in Ghana falls under the manifest form of political socialization. The role of the NCCE in political socialization and the development of democracy in Ghana is highly essential and worthy of our study since it is constitutionally mandated to enlighten the Ghanaian citizenry on their civic rights and responsibilities which include political participation at all levels.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study focused on the relationship between key variables in civic education programmes as well as expected outcomes required to achieve the needed citizenship enlightenment. Franca (1999) identified the key variables in civic education to include the problem to be addressed, goals, program content, methodology to employ, target audience and the resources available. It is worth noticing that clarifying the problem to be addressed will define the program content, which in turns influence the goals and objectives as well as target audience. However, this will not necessarily determine which methodology to be adopted, nor the level of resources or the duration of the entire program. Hence, the imperative for this current study to empirically establish the topical issues that dominate NCCE public discourse as well as investigate the methodology utilized. The variables of civic education are as illustrated in Figure 1.

An attempt is made to graphically capture the relationships between the key variables in civic education programmes and the sequence in which they are determined as depicted in Figure 1.



Source: Franca, 1999

Figure 1. Civic Education Programming: Relationship between key variables

Identification of a democratic problem that requires the intervention of civic education is the first step. The problem may be low participation in governance at the grassroots level, voter apathy, gender and disability issues. The problem identified therefore sets the parameters for the next stage, which includes determining the content of the civic education programme. When the program content is established, the goals and objectives as well as the target group may also be set. These two variables (i.e., goals and the target audience) are interdependent variables which control the choice of methodologies. Duration of the programme and resources allocation then come to mind. Although, duration and resources are not actually part of the analytical development of the civic education programming, we included them because they influence all the other decisions with regards to determination of other variables. There exist significant trade-offs between program duration and available resources with the argument that longer civic education programmes require more resources and vice versa.

Empirical Literature

Civic education and democracy: Civic education programmes are essential in the provision of accurate information about political processes and democratic institutions. In line with this, Finkel (2014) observed that in

most developing countries, civic education programmes were instrumental for the enhancement of individual political knowledge, empowerment and increased political participation at all levels. Kaunda (2018) concur with this finding that, civic education has significant impact on citizens participation in local politics. That is to say, when citizens are properly enlightened through civic education, they are able to appreciate their relevance in the political environment. The NCCE in its 2016 report affirmed the proposition that Ghanaians have crucial roles to play in promoting democratic governance in the state through their active involvement in the socio-cultural, political and economic activities of the country. To achieve effective citizens participation, the entire citizenry must be fully enlightened on the governance processes of the state. On his part, Yoldas (2015) observed that “Civic education is a future requirement of democracy and can only be effective in a democratic system” (p.547). Actually, if democracies survive on an informed and active citizenry, then it is equally imperative to examine the development of young people’s attitudes, values, and willingness to participate in the political and civic process through a properly situated civic education (Carreto et al., 2015; Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2004). On his part, Yoldas (2015) adumbrated that anytime democratic deficiencies are discussed, the rise of extremism is feared. This calls for effective and upgraded civic education to the citizenry, particularly, the youth. Civic education programmes aim at transmitting knowledge, skills, and values to the entire citizenry. It also to promotes political efficacy and participation among individuals. He continued that if citizens ignore politics and its related activities, the social system will lose its legitimacy and becomes dysfunctional. This is because, the scope of political participation is broad and places multiple demands on the citizenry. Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey (2015) made it simple when they opinionated that “no one, not even the leading exponents of democracy anywhere in the world today can successfully operate a democracy on mass illiteracy and mass ignorance. We cannot have the democratic freedom, justice and, equality when the majority of the people do not know their rights and responsibilities. The democratic institutions must be created and participation in the political process must be popular. Citizenship education (a vigorous one) is necessary to broaden the base of civil society participation” (p.632). An in-depth Knowledge of the constitutional provisions and the democratic principles, enlightens the citizenry to understand, defend and protect the constitution and the state at all times. Additionally, when the people are politically enlightened, they are more likely to become appreciative of the kind of relationship that should exist between them and the state.

The NCCE and its activities in Ghana

The mission of NCCE “is to promote and sustain democracy and inculcate in the Ghanaian citizenry, the awareness of their rights and obligations through civic education” (NCCE, 2016.P. 43). Since its inception in 1993, the NCCE has been very instrumental in carrying out its constitutionally assigned duty of educating the people on their rights and responsibilities as enshrined by the constitution. The Commission has Regional and District branches throughout the country. Most the Commission’s activities are in the form of educational forums, seminars, workshops, support and sponsorship of civic clubs, research projects and so on (Bawa, 2011). Voter or electoral education has been one of other areas of focus of activities of the NCCE. The NCCE has, over the years, been

working hard to get the citizens to participate in the scheduled District Assembly as well as Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. The Commission has always been concerned on the need for the individual citizen to exercise his or her franchise wisely and effectively, either as a candidate or as a voter at elections, be it local or national level elections (NCCE, 2012). In the year 2017, the NCCE organized seventy-five thousand, five hundred and twenty-four (75,524) civic activities across the length and breadth country. These activities directly reached over five million Ghanaians in their communities and several others indirectly through radio and television broadcast, publications in the dailies and social media. The NCCE's planned and implemented programmes in 2017 sought to inculcate in the Ghanaian citizens their civic and public responsibilities and appreciation of their fundamental rights as stakeholders in Ghana's democratic system. These activities in the year under review were carried out through awareness creation, education, sensitization and conscientization (NCCE, 2018). The Commission has, over the years, initiated some flagship programmes targeted at different segments of the Ghanaian population. Civic activities under the flagship programmes focus on pertinent national issues. They may be either school based, community based or faith-based engagements with identifiable groups through lectures, dialogues, seminars, workshops, quizzes or games and others (NCCE, 2018).

Bawa (2011) used interviews and questionnaires to establish that majority of citizens in the Cape Coast Metropolis have fair ideas about the NCCE and their activities. To him, even though seminars were not frequently organized by the NCCE, the commission was able to educate the people on their basic rights and responsibilities. Bawa (2011) also identify the media as the most effective medium by which the NCCE engaged the people of the Cape Coast Metropolis. NCCE was also on top of issues in carrying out education on HIV and AIDS (Bawa, 2011). However, a similar study by Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) points to an NCCE that has not been on top issues regarding the execution of its mandate, even though the study could not fully under estimate some key roles the NCCE play towards our democratic sustenance. Their study revealed among other things that the engagements of the NCCE are much felt during election seasons than other ordinary periods. That is to say, the NCCE's education is mostly skewed towards political issues. Although, it admits that the NCCE has not been very instrumental in reaching out majority of electorates to get them enlightened on important government policies and programmes. Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) made another revelation that the local people are rather of the view that the media (i.e., radio and television) is more efficient in the provision of civic education than the NCCE. On their part, Niworo et al. (2016) explained that even though the NCCE faced several financial, logistical as well as human resource challenges, they did their best to educate the people of Sissala East on issues like the 4th Republican Constitution of Ghana, local governance system, fundamental human rights, civic responsibilities like payment of taxes and other social issues. Notwithstanding, they were convinced that the NCCE could do much better if majority of the challenges they faced were addressed (Niworo et al., 2016).

Objectives of civic education

“Civic education is currently a field of vibrant research and practice that is producing significant pedagogical innovation.

However, it is a contested field with intense discussions about its goals and what teaching and learning processes should be” (Carretero et al., 2015). NCCE (2016) also elaborates the aims of civic education to include the following: inculcating in a people the ideals, principles, practices, values etc. needed for the survival and preservation of any political system and inculcating in the citizens the understanding to appreciate the rights of others. And also, educating the citizenry on effective political participation. This is done through acquisition and demonstration of civic knowledge, civic skills and civic dispositions. Yoldas (2015) sees knowledge of politics, political consciousness as well as political participation as the main objectives of civic education in modern democratic states. To him, civic education has the burden of meeting the goal of political maturity and independence of the entire citizenry in a democratic system. Carretero et al. (2015) observed that, over the years, civic education (typically) has concentrated on conveying factual knowledge about democratic institutions and processes, as well as elements of national history. However, there is a growing consensus that the entire citizenry also requires more diverse or varied civic knowledge and understanding to appreciate certain controversial issues (Carretero et al., 2015). Commenting again on the aims of civic education, Yoldas (2015) stated that civic education aims at shaping the individual to fit into the political, economic and social structures of the state. It, therefore, becomes a mechanism for the protection and growth of democracy in every state. Particularly, in this day of advanced civilization and globalization. Civic education, actually, becomes beneficial by ensuring a participatory and democratic political culture, as well as mediating between individuals, political institutions and other social organizations (Yoldas, 2015).

Similarly, Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg (2015) argued that “civic education, when implemented effectively, exemplifies deeper learning, requiring students to work together with peers and adults to diagnose and define problems, to deliberate and choose solutions, to implement strategies, and to reflect on the results” (p.2). Civic education also helps to generate critical thinkers who act responsibly to solve societal problems (Torney-Purta & Amadeo). In the school setting, “schools that implement high-quality civic learning are more likely to have a better school climate and are more likely to have lower dropout rates” (Levison, 2011, P.6). In a study, Levison (2011) reported that 81% of high school dropouts said they would have been less likely to drop out if there were more opportunities for experiential learning. In addition, students who received both traditional and interactive civic learning scored highest on assessments and demonstrated high levels of twenty-first century skills such as critical thinking, news comprehension, and work ethic. Also, Schools with properly structured civic learning programs are more likely to be safe, inclusive, and respectful (Levison, 2011). Finally, Quigley (1995) submitted that civics must clearly distinguish between education and indoctrination, thus civic education must not be seen as indoctrination. To him, civic education enables citizens to make informed choices in full awareness of other alternatives and also provides the kind of experiences and understanding that are needed to foster national development.

Challenges of civic education

Over the years, civic education has not been given the needed considerations it deserves. Boateng (1996) posited that civic

education is crucial to the very existence of democracy but has, unfortunately, not been given serious attention in Africa. To him, citizenship education must be made an integral part of the school curriculum and other non-formal programmes of education in order to get the entire population properly enlightened on civic issues. Similarly, Levinson (2011) noted that regardless of the obvious benefits of civic education, majority of schools in America either neglect or teach it in a minimal or superficial way (usually as an elective). The consequences of this neglect are shocking, but unsurprising. Interestingly, two-thirds of all-American students scored below proficient on a recent national assessment in civics. Similarly, less than one-third of eighth graders could identify the historical purpose of the Declaration of Independence. Again, fewer than one in five high school goers were able to explain how citizen participation in the state benefits democracy (Levinson, 2011). Most teachers are inadequately prepared in civic education. Also, assessment of civic education is inadequate in both content and frequency. Many states sponsor testing programs in mathematics and other subjects but hardly is civic education included. Teachers also spend, considerably, more time working with students on mathematics and reading than on other subjects such as civics. This situation is unfortunate because education for citizenship should start from childhood and continue into adulthood (Quigley, 1995).

Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg (2015) has issues concerning neutrality of instructional methodologies adopted for civic education: "certainly, civic education should be ideologically open-ended rather than propagandistic" (p.9). To them, beneficiaries of civic education should have the capacity to form their own views after independently reflecting on civic issues. They further suggested that instructional methodologies of civic education should be, as far as practicable, be neutral even though people see civic education as a field of controversy. On his part, Yoldas (2015) sees the uncontrolled press as a serious threat to effective civic education. He expressed that political apathy among the youth is considered to be indicative of the challenges of democracy and the paucity of civic education. It, therefore, becomes necessary to encourage children and teenagers to become politically vibrant through the media. But the information supply in the media, if not properly checked, may disorient the young ones. For this reason, the school, the family and friends must also take responsibility when it comes to explaining political issues to young people (Yoldas, 2015). Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey (2015) see the whole civic education process as laborious due to the unpredictability of man. To them, "education for democratic citizenship however becomes little more burdensome for the simple reason that citizens are not just sheep to be led but must consent to the direction and destination they are led"(Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey, 2015, P.632).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section focuses on presenting the methods employed in the design, collection, processing of data and presentation of research findings. The researchers followed the rigorous scientific approach which allows for verification of results by other researchers.

Research Approach and Design

The study was descriptive in nature, as it sought to evaluate the contributions of the NCCE towards grassroots democracy in

the Kwabre East Municipality. The main focus of a descriptive research design is to describe a phenomenon as well as its characteristics. It actually concerns itself with what is happening rather than telling why something happens. Hence, observation and survey tools are often used to gather data which is usually analyzed quantitatively with the help of frequencies, percentages, averages, and other statistical methods to determine relationships (Nassaji, 2015). The descriptive design may therefore be viewed as a survey in which data is collected about a given phenomenon to answer questions concerning the current or present status of the phenomena under study. The data collected in a descriptive survey, helps to define the characteristics of a specific population (Gay *et al.*, 2012). The descriptive design presents a clear picture through fact finding to provide accurate information aimed at achieving research objectives. The study adopted the quantitative research approach which is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity and numbers (Kothari, 2004). The quantitative approach makes good use of the conventional arithmetic and statistical methods in measuring research outcomes. Harwell (2011) observed that the quantitative research method provides an enhanced objectivity and generalizations with regard to its findings. With this study, primary data was collected using survey instrument known as a questionnaire. The quantitative research approach was utilized because it is rigorous and aids easy comprehension of research outcomes. Another compelling reason for adopting the quantitative approach is its intrinsic flexibility and interactive nature which makes it suitable for the problem under study.

Sample Size

Research sample refers to the selected group of elements or units from the total population. Also put simply, is the subset of the research population. In order to determine the sample size for a scientific study, Yamene (1967) proposed a mathematical formula which the research adopted. The formula is presented as $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ where n is the expected sample size, N is the total population and e is the error margin. The research work is limited in scope in terms of time and resources and as such, the findings would not necessarily be generalized to the entire population and therefore permitted an error margin of 8.3% to maintain a 91.7 (92%) confidence level. Using the Yamene's formula at a 92% confidence level and 0.08 permissible error margins, a sample size of 145 was selected from the randomly sampled Mampongeng- Fawoade cluster.

That is;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size, N = Population and e = Error Margin

$$(n) = \frac{134,991}{1 + [134,991(0.083)^2]}$$

$$(n) = \frac{134,991}{1 + 134,991(0.006889)} = \frac{134,991}{1 + 929.953}$$

$$n = \frac{134,991}{930.953} \text{ sample} = 145$$

Sampling Techniques

A multi-stage cluster sampling method was used in selecting the 145 study participants which was done as follows; firstly,

communities in the thirty-one (31) electoral areas of the municipality were zoned into clusters as follows:

1. Mamponteng-Fawoade cluster comprising Mamponteng, Fawoade-Bampenase, Dumanafa, Wadie Adwumakaase and Asenua.
2. Ahwiaa-Kenyase cluster comprising Ahwiaa, Kenyase, Meduma, Adwumam, Bosore and Abirem.
3. Antoa-Adanwomase cluster comprising Antoa, Adanwomase, Bamang, Wonoo, Ahodwo, Adesena, Abira and Krobo.
4. Ntonso-Aboaso cluster comprising Ntonso, Aboaso, Safo, Kasem, Nkwanta and Asenemaso.

Secondly, the lottery system which is a random sampling method where the names of the four clusters were written on cards concealed in a polythene bag and picked only once without replacement, the Mamponteng-Fawoade cluster was selected and was further subjected to the proportional stratification method relative to the individual community voter population sizes as shown in Table 1 to help determine the total number of participants to be selected from each community.

Table 1. Composition of the sample size

Community	Population	Percentage	Sample
Asenua	5,022	14%	20
Fawoade-Bampenase	12,287	33%	48
Mamponteng	14,058	37%	54
Wadie Adumakase	3,179	9%	13
Dumanafa	2,623	7%	10
Total	37,169	100%	145

Source: Researchers' own construct from 2020 Voter Register

In totality, one hundred and forty-five (145) respondents were selected using the household survey method where the researcher counted every third (3rd) house with its occupants who are of the voting age, to be included in the sample from each community. Finally, a purposive sampling technique was then utilized to select five (5) NCCE officials in the Kwabre East Municipality to answer another structured questionnaire designed purposely for the NCCE staff.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire mostly of closed - ended questions was used in the data collection from the respondents. The survey items were developed based on the objectives of the study which are: to explore the methods used by the NCCE in promoting grassroots democracy in the Kwabre East Municipality; to know the level of knowledge the people have about the NCCE and its activities; and to also find out the issues that dominate the NCCE's discussion with the people. The study adopted survey questionnaires rather than other tools like test, interview and phone surveys because it allows for several participants to be reached within a researcher's limited resources and also increase the response rate for reliability (McLeod, 2018). The researchers administered two different set of questionnaires to respondents of the NCCE officials and general public categories. The reason for this approach was to give enough question space peculiar to the two categories since the perception of the general public on NCCE's civic education may differ from that of the officials of the civic education institution. The questions type was mainly that close-ended specifically dichotomous questions where respondents were to choose between two mutually-exclusive

options such as 'male/female' and 'yes/no' questions; contingency/cascading questions were also included which only required respondents to answer certain question(s) relative to an earlier option chosen which helped in asking follow-up questions to solicit for detailed information from participants. The study again utilized multiple choice questions which provided several predetermined options to questions for respondents to select what is applicable to them. The multiple choices question format is salient as the researcher get the avenue to suggest answers based on a given variable under study which is often presented in a closed-ended format (Goode & Hatt, 1974). The final set of closed-end questions used was the continuous rating scale format to enable respondents to rank their options on the frequency at which certain events happened such as 'not at all', 'only once', 'quite often' and 'very often'.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the method employed to input data or figures to solve a research problem which mostly follows either the quantitative or qualitative approach. The data gathered from the study was handled quantitatively following the Positivists research paradigm which argue that science and for that matter the systematic way of knowing about our world is by observation (experimentation), measurement (testability) and recording. The study used quantitative statistical analysis in order to make a deduction and to present results devoid of any interference from the researcher (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). Responses from the closed-ended questions were pre-coded into values of '0' or '1' as advocated by the positivists' paradigm (Kerlinger, 1986) and entered into a computer software known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS v21) to general descriptive statistics.

Ethical Considerations

The research paid peculiar attention to the under listed ethical principles as described by Chirk (2006).

- *Respect for Confidentiality and Privacy*: Considering the technical and delicate nature of some of the questions the research seeks to answer, the researchers indicated to all respondents by word of mouth, the confidentiality of their responses and to also keep them anonymous in processing the data.
- *Objectivity*: The data collected was carefully coded and entered into the IBM SPSS version 21 computer software for analysis. The outcomes were presented and discussed accordingly without any interference from the researchers' interests or foreknowledge about activities of the NCCE.

RESULTS

This section seeks to make an elaborate presentation of the results of the field survey conducted. The data cover responses from the total 145 sampled participants from the general public category. The study thereby adopts simple descriptive statistics to help communicate the results, which are summarized in Tables.

Methods used by the NCCE to promote grassroots democracy

The study sought to find out the different methods or strategies employed by the NCCE in reaching-out to the general public

with civic education, and therefore inquired from the participants to attest to use of these methods of civic education by the NCCE at the district level or otherwise. The following tables summarize the responses to the various questions posed to the participants.

Table 2. Observing NCCE activities by the general public

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	112	77.2	77.2	77.2
No	33	22.8	22.8	100.0
Total	145	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the responses of the public on whether they have ever observed any activity organized by the NCCE at the district level or not. As indicated, a total of 112 (77.2%) of the participants affirmed that they have ever observed an activity organized by the NCCE whilst 33 (22.8%) of them rather said they have never observed such activity of the NCCE at the district level. The data reveals that a larger percentage of the people sampled are aware of the activities of the NCCE even though a significant number of them are yet to have that exposure.

Table 3 presents a tabular summary of the views of the general public on whether the NCCE employ the available methods of providing civic education in the Kwabre East Municipality. It is found that, pertaining to the use of the social media as a means of providing civic education to the public, the NCCE appears not be using that medium as 91.7% (n=133) of the people affirmed that whereas 8.3% (n=12) gave the NCCE the credit of utilizing the social media for civic education. The use of information van was also somewhat poorly rated as 66.9% (n=97) representing majority of the people, said the NCCE do not educate them using information van in their localities whilst 33.1% (n=48) of them said they have been given civic education by the NCCE through information van. It is again shown in Table 3 that, 74.5 % (n=108) representing majority of the people, said the NCCE do not organize public durbars in their localities to give them civic education whilst 25.5% (n=37) minority said they have been giving civic education through public durbar organized by the NCCE. The NCCE is also said to be visiting people at their places of worship to provide civic education. However, when it comes to Kwabre East Municipality, the NCCE appears not to be utilizing that method that much as have been confirmed by 77.9% (n=113) of the total sampled with the remaining 22.1% (n=32) attesting to the fact that, the NCCE do visit them at their places of worship to provide civic education. Another method used in providing civic education is that of the community information centres of which when it comes to the Kwabre East Municipality, the NCCE is doing well with the method as 59.3% (n=86) being majority of the people, said they have been receiving civic education from the NCCE through the community information centres whilst 40.7% (n=59) representing the minority, said they have never been educated by the NCCE through their community information centres.

Table 3 also presents responses on whether the NCCE visit schools in the local communities to provide civic education or not, of which, 55.9% (n=81) being the majority said they have ever seen the NCCE visiting schools in the locality for civic education with the remaining 44.1% (n=64) being the minority, saying they have never seen the NCCE visiting schools to give civic education. Last but not the least method

of civic education that was inquired about, is the use of civic clubs to provide civic education to the public. With this method, the NCCE is considered to have under-utilized it as confirmed by 89.7% (n=130) as against the 10.3% (n=15) minority who said they have been educated by the NCCE through their civic clubs established in the municipality. The data in Table 3 reveals that, while the NCCE is doing well by providing civic education using the community information centres and the visiting of schools, they have rather trailed in the use of the social media as well as the establishment of civic clubs for civic education.

Issues that dominate NCCE's civic education

Another equally important objective of the study was to ascertain the dominant issues of the NCCE civic education in the Kwabre East Municipality. To help realize this objective, the study inquired about the frequency at which the people are engaged by the NCCE on selected topical issues which have been summarized in Tables 4, 5 and 6 below.

Table 4 presents the data on the frequency at which the NCCE engages the people on civic education topical issues. The data shows that with voting as a topical issue, 26.9% of the respondents said the NCCE had never educated them on voting and its processes, 19.3% said the NCCE had done that only once, 38.6% are of the view that the NCCE do provides them with voter education quite often whilst 15.2% of them also affirming that the NCCE very often than not, provides them civic education on voting and its processes. With the provisions of the 1992 4th Republican Constitution as a topical issue, 25.5% of the total 145 participants said the NCCE had never educated them on the 1992 Constitution, 20.0% said the NCCE had provided constitutional education only once, 42.1% of them said they receive constitutional education quite often whilst the remaining 12.4% said the NCCE do provides education on the 1992 Constitution very often. Another topical issue considered was political participation of which 26.2% of the respondents said the NCCE never provides education on political participation, 20.7% said they have received education on political participation from the NCCE only once, 40.7% of them also said the NCCE educate them on political participation quite often whilst 12.4% of the respondents were rather of the view that the NCCE educates them on political participation very often. Education on Fundamental Human Rights also received the attention of the researcher where it was found from Table 4 that, 26.9% of the people said the NCCE had never educated them on their fundamental human rights, 18.6% said they have received education on human rights only once, 42.8% of them said they receive education on human rights quite often from the NCCE with the remaining 11.7% attesting to the fact that NCCE educate them on fundamental human rights very often. On taxation as a topical issue, 38.6% have never been educated by the NCCE on tax payment, 16.6% have received education on taxation only once, 37.9% of them are educated on taxation quite often with the remaining 6.9% saying the NCCE provide civic education on tax payment very often. Civic education on child labour was also considered of which 41.4% of the total respondents said they have never been educated on child labour by the NCCE, 12.4% of them said the NCCE had given such education only once, 39.3% of them also said the NCCE have been providing education on child labour quite often whilst 6.9% said they receive education on this topic from the NCCE very often.

Table 3. Methods utilize by NCCE to provide civic education to the general public

	Social Media	Information Van	Public Durbar	Worship Centre	Information Centre	School Visitation	Civic Clubs
Yes	8.3	33.1	25.5	22.1	59.3	55.9	10.3
No	91.7	66.9	74.5	77.9	40.7	44.1	89.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4. NCCE provision of civic education on selected topical issues

Civic education topical issues							
Frequency		Voting Process	1992 Constitution	Political participation	Human Rights	Tax Payment	Child Labor
	Not at all	26.9	25.5	26.2	26.9	38.6	41.4
	Only once	19.3	20.0	20.7	18.6	16.6	12.4
	Quite often	38.6	42.1	40.7	42.8	37.9	39.3
	Very often	15.2	12.4	12.4	11.7	6.9	6.9
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5. NCCE provision of civic education on selected topical issues

Civic education topical issues							
Frequency		Illegal Ventures	Entrepreneurship	Environment & Sanitation	Health Issues	Sex Education	Domestic Violence
	Not at all	49.0	78.6	34.5	38.6	61.4	35.9
	Only once	32.4	18.6	8.3	9.7	32.4	8.3
	Quite often	17.2	2.8	38.6	46.9	6.2	42.1
	Very often	1.4	0.0	18.6	4.8	0.0	13.8
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4 above reveals that, the NCCE quite often than not, provide civic education to the general public on the topical issues presented. Table 5 presents the data on the frequency at which the NCCE engages the people on other civic education topical issues. With illegal economic ventures as a topical issue, 49.0% of the respondents said the NCCE never educate them on what constitute legal and illegal business ventures, 32.4% said the NCCE had done that only once, 17.2% are of the view that the NCCE provide civic education on illegal ventures quite often whilst 1.4% also affirmed that the NCCE very often than not, provides them civic education on illegal economic activities. With entrepreneurship as a topical issue, 78.6% of the total 145 participants said the NCCE had never given them entrepreneurial education, 18.6% said the NCCE had educated them on entrepreneurship only once with the remaining 2.8% saying they receive entrepreneurial education from the NCCE quite often. Another topical issue considered was education on environment and sanitation of which 34.5% of the respondents said the NCCE never provide education on the environment and sanitation, 8.3% said they have received education on this topic from the NCCE only once, 38.6% also said the NCCE educate them on sanitation quite often whilst 18.6% of the respondents were rather of the view that NCCE educate them very often on sanitation and the environment. Education on health issue also received the attention of the researchers where it was found that, 38.6% of the people said the NCCE had never educated them on health issues, 9.7% said they have received education on this topic only once, 46.9% of them said they receive education on health quite often from the NCCE with the remaining 4.8% attesting to the fact that NCCE educate them on health issues very often. On sex education as a topical issue, 61.4% said they have never been given sex education by the NCCE, 32.4% have received sex education only once with the remaining 6.2% saying the NCCE do provide them sex education quite often. To end it all on the topical issues, education on domestic violence was considered of which 35.9% of the total respondents said they have never been educated on domestic violence by the NCCE, 8.3% of them said the NCCE had given them such education only once, 42.1% also said the NCCE have been providing education on domestic violence quite often whilst 13.8% said they receive education on this topic from the NCCE very often.

Table 5 reveals that the NCCE quite often than not, provide civic education on health issues, domestic violence, environment and sanitation, entrepreneurship, illegal economic ventures and that of sex education.

Table 6. Dominant issues of NCCE civic education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Political issues	63	43.4	43.4
Economic issues	33	22.8	22.8
Social issues	49	33.8	33.8
Total	145	100.0	100.0

Table 6 is the summary of the dominant topical issues discussed by the NCCE in their civic education activities. The individual topics in table 4 and table 5 above were categorized under political, economic and social issues to help identify the dominant issues of the NCCE civic education in Kwabre East Municipality. From Table 6 above, a total of 63 (43.4%) out of the 145 sampled said political issue which comprises 'voting process', '1992 Constitution', 'political participation' and 'fundamental human rights' dominate NCCE civic education. Economic issue which is made up of 'tax payment', 'illegal economic ventures', 'entrepreneurship' and 'child labour' also got the confirmation of 33 (22.8%) of the respondents whilst a total of 49 (33.8%) respondents said social issue comprising of 'environment and sanitation', 'health issues', 'sex education' and 'domestic violence' rather dominate the civic education activities of the NCCE. The data above reveal that, majority of the participants consider the NCCE to be preoccupied with providing civic education on political issues with a little attention given to that of social and economic issues respectively.

DISCUSSION

This section of the paper presents a detailed discussion on the research findings relative to the theoretical and empirical data in the extant literature on civic education and democratic consolidation. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the methods utilized by the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) in contributing towards grassroots democracy in Ghana, using the Kwabre East Municipality as a

study area. This section thereby presents the summary of major findings, conclusions, and implication for policy action and recommendations for further research.

Methods used by the NCCE in promoting grassroots democracy

The study established that, the NCCE uses variety of methods in reaching out to the people of Kwabre East Municipality. These methods include the use of the mass media (radio, television, newspaper, local information center and social media) and other methods such as community durbars, visiting religious bodies and schools, as well as establishment of civic clubs. On the part of the mass media, aside from the radio and local information center of which, 42.1% and 22.1% of the people respectively indicated as the main medium through which they encounter the NCCE, the other media outlets seem not to be effectively utilized by the NCCE in Ghana. Pertaining to the other methods of civic education, school visiting was found to be the most utilized method. The use of variety of methods by the NCCE in the Kwabre East Municipality supports the assertion of Torney-Purta, & Amadeo (2004) that, there is no single and universally successful approach to strengthening democracy through civic education. The study however found that, the civic education methods employed by the NCCE lack innovation and collaborative learning since they did not take advantage of advanced technologies like the use of the internet and the social media (new-age media) to reach-out to the masses as recommended by Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg (2015).

Issues that dominate the NCCE's discussions with the general public

It was found from the study that, the NCCE do discusses political, economic and social issues with the people of Kwabre East Municipality. The political issues comprised voter education, education on the 1992 Constitution, fundamental human rights and political participation. Education on tax payment, child labour, illegal economic activities and entrepreneurship, constituted education on economic issues. On social issues, the following issues were specifically identified; health issues, sanitation and environmental issues, sex education and education on domestic violence. In this regard, 43.4% of the general public believe that political issues dominate the NCCE's discussions. This revelation was concurred with the assertions of 37.3% of the staff of the NCCE. This finding is consistent with the observation of Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey (2015) that, the NCCE is more active during election seasons than other ordinary periods. Howbeit, Yoldas (2015) is of a divergent view that, civic education helps to shape the individual to fit into the political, economic and social structures of the state. It therefore demands that for grassroots democracy to survive, education on political, economic and social issues must be fairly balanced in the civic education programs in Ghana.

Conclusion

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has been an invaluable institution in the growth of democracy in Ghana, particularly, in the Fourth Republic. In its move to orientate the people on the basic tenets of democracy, diverse strategies are to be deployed to reach out to the citizens. This

notwithstanding, the institution appears to be tilted towards the use of community information centres and visiting most of its audience at their places of worship, as the predominant civic education methodologies. When the NCCE of Ghana settles on only these strategies, given that they somewhat promote its civic education activities, it rather places a limitation on the NCCE in getting most of their essential programs downwards to the various parts of the society. This current has established that the Kwabre East Municipal office of the NCCE utilizes variety of methods in providing civic education to the people. Howbeit, the institution fails to exploit the emerging media of mass, instant and relatively cost-effective to the general public. The social media handles of the institution ought to be activated and keep-running. Given the demographic dynamics of Ghana, with an ever-increasing Youthful population, the study accordingly recommends to the officials of the NCCE both at the district and national levels to infuse emerging technologies in the form of e-communication, e-socialization and the establishment of civic clubs in the various communities, so as to expand their civic education coverage. Inasmuch as the NCCE blends political issues, economic issues and social issues in their engagement with the people of Kwabre East municipality, the predominant topical issues of discourse are political in nature. This comprises education on voting, education on the provisions of the 1992 Constitution, and on fundamental human rights as well as encouraging political participation. Other issues of national interest should be prioritized and given the needed coverage by the NCCE as well. This when done effectively, can go at length to wholly educate and equip the people to uphold the democratic gains of Ghana, particularly, at the grassroots level.

Limitations of the study

A study of this nature should have been broader in scope to cover the entire nation and population. However, the limited time as well as other financial resources, could not have supported the move. The study was thus confined to the Kwabre East Municipality only. This makes it extremely difficult to apply the findings or information from such a relatively small population to the general situation. Again, the face-to-face questionnaire administration approach adopted on the field was quite stressful since all questions were to be interpreted, particularly, to the illiterate respondents in the Asante Twi language to aid effective understanding. Also sustaining the interests of respondents throughout the questionnaire administration process was quite difficult since some respondents had divided attention.

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