

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE**

ISSN-2213-1356

www.ijirk.com

**IS THE FREQUENT REPLACEMENT OF GHANA'S
VOTERS REGISTER THE PANACEA TO A
CREDIBLE REGISTER?**

DR. DOMINIC ALIMBEY DERY

FACULTY OF APPLIED ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LIBERAL STUDIES
TAMALE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DR. BAATAAR K.M. CUTHBERT

VICE DEAN OF STUDENTS
FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND GENERAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

JOHN STEPHEN AGBENYO

FACULTY OF APPLIED ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES
TAMALE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Abstract

The research was a descriptive survey through which views and opinions were sampled from registered voters (electorate). This descriptive study describes the things that be-devil the Ghanaian voters' register and how to produce a more lasting, robust and reliable register that will stand the test of time. Among the key findings were the issues of minors registering, multiple registration and the registration of non-Ghanaians. The study concluded with some suggestions to the Electoral Commission, key stakeholders and the Government.

Key words: *Frequent, Replacement, Voters, Register, Panacea and Credible*

1.0 Introduction

A bloated voters' register has been the greatest problem to all stakeholders in Ghana's electoral system. The final voters' registers used in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 elections were considered bloated with names of unqualified persons.

The general causes of bloated Voters' Register in Ghana's electoral system are: multiple registrations, registration of persons below 18 years (minors), registration of non-Ghanaians, names of deceased persons and ghost entries by some unscrupulous registration officials. Some of the causes mentioned could be deliberate and some caused by administrative errors.

The voters' register had been grossly inflated in the 2000 elections, especially in greater Accra, Ashanti and Volta Regions. The reasons given focused on double registration and fraudulent registration of minors and deceased persons as major problems resulting in an estimated 1.5 million "ghost voters" (cf. Smith 2002: 624-31). Also, during the 2008 exhibition of the voters' register 349,496 entries out of a total of 12,822,474 registered voters were removed by the EC because they were considered to be irregular (cf. also EU-EOM 2009: 14-16). In view of a persistently bloated register, notably in Ashanti and Volta Regions, the abnormally high turnout figures in 2008 general elections were even more questionable as they might be due last but not least to "ghost voters" (CODEO 4th August 2008 statement). The objective of this paper is to offer solutions to the frequent replacement of the Ghanaian Voters' Register. Thus the question that captures the attention of this research paper is: What is/are the panacea to the frequent calls for the replacement of Ghana's Voters' Register?

2.0 A Brief Review of Literature

The Voter Registration System in Ghana

Voter Registration System consists of the institutions responsible for registration of voters, the voter registration legal framework, the stakeholders in the voter registration processes, the interconnected voter registration processes and procedures leading to the production of the final voters register, and the methods used in the voter registration.

As said by Astrid Evrensel voter registration is highly complex and is the single most expensive activity within the framework of elections. He also stated that voter registration is not just the technical implementation of an activity; it is a holistic political, administrative and practical process and role of voter registration is especially important when it comes to emerging democracies: it can make or break an election. The quality of the process and the product – that is, the voters' roll – can determine the outcome of an election and consequently the stability of the democratic institutions in a country.

The Institutions Responsible For Registration of Voter

As stated in the Mali 2002 Presidential Election Final Report by Carter Center, three separate bodies have responsibility for the conduct of elections in Mali. These are:

1. Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) is responsible for the supervision of the general conduct of the elections.
2. Delegate General of Elections (DGE) is responsible for the compilation of the voters list and maintaining the voters roll.
3. Ministry of Territorial Administration and Local Government (MATCL) manages the conduct of the elections and is responsible for the overall technical and material support of the elections, the management of the tabulation process, and the announcement of provisional election results.

In Ghana the Electoral Commission (EC) is mandated to compile a register of voters for the purpose of conducting public elections. Article 45 of the 1992 Republican Constitution states that, the Electoral Commission shall have the following functions:

- (a) to compile the register of voters and revise it at such periods as may be determined by law;
- (b) to demarcate the electoral boundaries for both national and local government elections;
- (c) to conduct and supervise all public elections and referenda;
- (d) to educate the people on the electoral process and its purpose;
- (e) to undertake programmes for the expansion of the registration of voters and
- (f) to perform such other functions as may be prescribed by law.

The Voter Registration Legal Framework

By *Robert Richie* “when voter rolls are error ridden and a quarter of eligible voters cannot vote, registration laws are not only failing their primary function of ensuring that voters are qualified to vote but also acting as barriers to participation.” Robert Richie also believes that having full registration of newly eligible voters will also significantly reduce duplications and omissions in the voter rolls and help create a system that balances the concerns of election accessibility and voter fraud.

In Ghana it is entrenched in the 1992 Constitution under Article 51 that “the Electoral Commission shall, by constitutional instrument, make regulations for the effective performance of its functions under this Constitution or any other law, and in particular, for the registration of voters, the conduct of public elections and referenda, including provision for voting by proxy” (source *the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*).

According to *David A Kangah and Kwadwo Sarfo-Kantanka at a Conference of Commonwealth Chief Election Officers Queens’ College Cambridge - 23-26 March 1998* In Ghana, the current constitution, written in 1992 under a chapter on Representation of the People states that “Every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda.” This statement gives a right to register and vote and so registration as a voter and participation in public elections and referenda in Ghana are voluntary. But there are other incentives that make a person want to register as a voter. For example, one of the qualifications for appointment to certain positions is that one is qualified to be a Member of Parliament (MP). However to be an MP a person must be a registered voter.

They also postulated that the 1992 constitution also established an Electoral Commission with one of its functions as “to compile the register of voters and revise it at such periods as may be determined by law.” In fact it goes on further to say that the Electoral Commission is also to undertake programmes for the expansion of the registration of voters.

Parliament in 1993 enacted the Electoral Commission Law (Act 451, 1993) to give effect to the electoral provisions of the constitution. Based upon the provisions of the Electoral Commission Act, the Commission drew up regulations for registration which were passed into law by Parliament in 1995 as “Public Elections (Registration of Voters) Regulations 1995” (Constitutional Instrument, C.I. 12).

The regulations under qualification for registration apart from those qualifications stated in the constitution require that a person must be resident or ordinarily resident in an electoral area and is not prohibited by any law in force from registering as a voter to be entitled to have his or her name included in the register of voters. The regulations provide that the Commission shall designate any place it considers appropriate as a registration centre for the purpose of registering voters. Since such centres are also used as polling stations the Commission ensures that the centre is within reach of the voters in the electoral area and it can stand any weather conditions on Election Day. In fact the Commission is required under these regulations to make

known in the national newspapers and gazette the places that it designates as registration centres. The list of the centres is made available to the political parties to enable them assign their agents to these places during the registration period and when the provisional registers are exhibited. The regulations provide for the Electoral Commission to specify the period during which the registration of voters shall take place. However it would appear that the constitutional requirement is to have registration of voters on request. That is, as soon as a citizen qualifies to have his/her name included in the register it should be possible for that to be done.

Voter Registration Requirement in Ghana

Voter registration requirements are the clearest example of electoral control in the Contemporary Democratic States.

Ole Holtved stated that the legislative framework for Ghana relating to electoral issues is divided into a number of separate laws on: the establishment of the electoral commission; presidential and parliamentary elections; local government elections; election laws for other organizations; voter registration; demarcation; and political parties.

Electoral rolls are a fundamental component of any voting system. They constitute the official list of electors and are prima facie evidence of electors' right to vote. Enrolment procedures therefore need to strike the right balance between the need to be rigorous to ensure integrity of the rolls, and the need for flexibility to ensure that peoples' rights to enroll and vote are protected (ACE, 1999).

“The history of the franchise is also the history of the abuses and harassment that prevented citizens legally entitled to vote from doing so. These included tricky rules and tests for voter registration, manipulation of residential requirements, choice of voting days, violations of the secrecy of the vote, district mal-apportionment and gerrymandering... De facto, however, these measures disenfranchised certain social groups” (Bartolini, 2000, 118.)

As stated by James G. Gimpel, Joshua J. Dyck and Daron R. Shaw, in Florida to register, one must be a citizen of the United States, a resident of Florida, 18 years of age (one may pre-register if you are 17.)

As stated by *Carter Center-National Elections in Liberia-Fall 2011-Final Report*; the constitution provides for all of the fundamental rights common to a democratic state, and it provides an adequate basis for the conduct of democratic elections if implemented in a transparent and consistent manner. These include equality before the law and the rights of freedom of expression, association, and assembly. The will of the people constitutes the basis of state power. This will is expressed by free elections periodically conducted and based on universal, equal, direct, secret, and freely expressed suffrage.

As Ginsberg (1982:96) stressed, a personal registration requirement does not diminish the impact of electoral outcomes, but does influence the kinds of decisions the electorate is likely to make. By instituting a legal precondition for electoral participation, registration itself becomes an important, if technically ancillary, form of participation.

An often expressed truism in U.S. voter-turnout studies says that people vote because they are registered and higher turnout levels will first require active voter registration efforts. This belief is based on studies that show registration and turnout to be closely related and that the low levels of turnout in the United States are, to a large extent, a product of registration requirements (Erikson, 1981; Kelley, Ayres, & Bowen, 1967; Piven & Cloward, 1988; Rosenstone & Wolfinger, 1978; Teixeira, 1992).

In Ghana voter registration requirements are stated in the 1992 Constitution and the Public Elections (Registration of Voters) Regulations 2012 (Constitutional Instrument, C.I. 72).

In the Constitution, under chapter seven-Representation of the People- Article 42 it is stated that “Every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda.” This is a basic requirement of every Ghanaian living everywhere.

The Public Elections (Registration of Voters) Regulations 2012 (Constitutional Instrument, C.I. 72) also gave further requirements under Regulation one (1) -Qualification for registration- sub regulations (1, 2, 3 and 4).

Sub regulation (1) states that, a person is entitled to have the name of that person included in the register of voters of an electoral area, if that person is

- (a) a citizen of Ghana;
- (b) eighteen years of age or above;
- (c) of a sound mind;
- (d) residents or ordinarily resident in an electoral area; and
- (e) not prohibited by any law in force from registering as a voter.

Sub regulation (2) states that, for the purpose of paragraph (d) of sub regulation (1), a person who is confined in a penal institution located in an electoral area is resident in that electoral area.

Sub regulation (3) states a person applies for registration as a voter shall provide as evidence of identification one of the following:

- (a) a passport;
- (b) a driver’s license;
- (c) a national identification card;
- (d) a National Health Insurance card;
- (e) an existing voter identification card;
- (f) one voter registration identification guarantee form as set out in Form One of the schedule that has completed and signed by two registered voters.

Sub-regulation (4) states “Despite paragraph (f) of sub-regulation (3), a registered voter shall not guarantee the identity of more than five persons.

Ordinary residence has been defined by *David A Kangah and Kwadwo Sarfo-Kantanka at a Conference of Commonwealth Chief Election Officers Queens’ College Cambridge - 23-26 March 1998* to mean that a person shall deemed to be ordinarily resident in an area if within the four years prior to the registration time he/she has lived in the area for an aggregate period of not less than twelve months.

Ensuring Stakeholder Trust/Confidence in Voter Registration Processes in Ghana

Trust in democracy is promoted when the voter registration process is open, transparent and allows for the participation of all electoral stakeholders – namely, political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, security forces, the international community and all potential voters in a country. Importantly, the electoral process should support a culture of dialogue and shared responsibility (Astrid Evrensel p1.)

According to Alioune Cisse and Astrid Evrensel when the opportunity arises to decide on a new voter registration system in a country, there is often political desire to include additional requirements and security features in order to prevent multiple registrations. These requirements are generally associated with significantly more sophisticated data collection and processing systems, such as automated fingerprint identification and facial recognition systems.

In order to avoid conflict and enhance the legitimacy of the election, particularly in post-conflict countries, the voter registration process has to be inclusive of all key stakeholders, transparent, and well understood by the

population (*Report, European Commission – United Nations Development Programme Thematic Workshop Mombasa, 5-9 March, 2012, hosted by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Kenya.*)

A limited voter registration drive organized by the Electoral Commission from 31 July to 12 August 2008 was widely criticized by all political parties. Both the NDC and NPP claimed the lack of safeguards during the registration exercise allowed the opposing party to inflate the number of names on the register. Both parties also criticized by the Electoral Commission for trying to undermine the process. Poor forward planning, the absence of adequate safeguards and voter education coupled with a lack of resources such as forms and photographic equipment to cope with demand from people wishing to register compounded problems of a tight timeline for the completion of registration. People applied to register for a variety of reasons including individuals wishing to obtain an identification card for general purposes. There was also some confusion as to what constituted double registration as well as overt attempts to undermine the veracity of the register. The latter registrations included intentional double registrations and a large number of minors who registered. There were also incidents of individual candidates and political parties providing transport for their supporters to register with inadequate control mechanisms to screen the eligibility of people who could register at registration centres. Generally the candidates and political parties were perceived by observers to have been too involved in voter registration and the Electoral Commission did not use adequate safeguards to ensure this did not negatively affect the accuracy of the register (*as cited in the European Union Election Observation Mission to Ghana Final Report on the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 2008 p14*).

Stakeholders must be informed regularly and their views considered both at the decision-making phase and during the conduct of a voter registration exercise. This will increase stakeholders' support and trust of the overall process and its product – the voters' roll. Primary stakeholders are directly affected by the voter registration process or its outcome. Included in this category are citizens who are eligible to register, the registration authority, political parties and candidates, executive government, legislatures, EMB staff, contractors, electoral dispute resolution and supervisory bodies, the media, observers and monitors, CSOs, donors and assistance agencies, and suppliers and vendors. Secondary stakeholders have an interest but are not directly affected by the exercise. Included in this category are the general public, academia, international or regional electoral networks and research institutes.

International IDEA identifies a number of areas for interaction, namely: communication; sensitivity; serious consideration of views; equitable treatment; transparency; ethics; respect for human rights; impartiality; and fair resolution of conflict.

The EMB must play a central role in ensuring that stakeholders are appropriately informed. Feedback from stakeholders has to be acknowledged and responded to in the appropriate timeframe. The legislature should seek stakeholder input regarding legislative reform processes, allow stakeholders to participate in briefings on the system and progress made, and create consultative legislative reform mechanisms (Astrid Evrensel pp19-20).

Guiding Principles for Voter Registration

In structuring a voter register the principal guiding principles are simplicity of procedures and convenience for the citizen. As we are dealing with the exercise of a right (i.e., the suffrage), political authorities and public officials must not hinder the exercise of that right by imposing obstacles. Simple administrative procedures must be put in place, and the process for citizens to register must be made as convenient as possible (e.g., avoiding long distances, payment of heavy fees on stamps and photos, or having to show up several times at registration centres). Registers which are all-inclusive constitute a guarantee that no significant segment of the population is impeded from registering and voting because of geographic, economic, ethnic-cultural, gender, or education reasons. Several stages in the struggle towards universal suffrage have been identified; these phases were different in the United States and in Europe. In the United States, the franchise expanded slowly

and by compromising steps and, despite the earlier start of franchise expansion, it took much longer to complete than in Europe. Administrative and legal obstacles were fully removed only in the 1960s (Bartolini, 2000, 118).

Integrity

The voter registration framework and processes must be fair and honest, free from political and other manipulation or intimidation, allow all eligible persons to register as voters and not allow ineligible persons to register as voters. The integrity of the voters' roll is one of the basic principles on which the legitimacy of an election is founded.

Inclusiveness

Voter registration frameworks and processes should not contain measures that exclude persons from registration to serve political advantage.

Comprehensiveness

Voter registration exercises should aim at registering 100% of qualified persons, including those societal groups that may be less inclined to register to vote, such as women, youth and those to whom standard registration processes may be less accessible. Comprehensiveness and inclusiveness are closely related, complementary principles: inclusiveness ensures no group in society is denied equitable opportunities to register to vote; and comprehensiveness targets the registration of every eligible person in each societal group.

Accuracy

All voter registration information should be recorded accurately and maintained properly so that the voter lists used for elections are up to date. This may require implementing systems to check data validity and the accuracy of data recording, as well as proactive programmes to check that all data is up to date and to receive advice of and process any necessary amendments.

Accessibility

Voter registration processes should be physically and geographically accessible as well as readily understandable by all persons qualified to register. Accessibility implies that the locations and hours of operation of any offices or other means of receiving information for voter registration are widely publicized, both before and while they are in operation. The voter registration framework and processes need to be sufficiently simple and clear so that they are fully understood by the public.

An Informed Public

Voter registration processes should be clearly explained and widely publicized to all potential eligible voters as well as to all stakeholder organizations in the electoral process, such as political parties, the media and CSOs. This may be an EMB responsibility or a task shared between the EMB and civil society. If multiple bodies provide information on voter registration, it is prudent to set up a coordinating mechanism under impartial control to promote accuracy, consistency and political neutrality of the messages, as well as to limit the overlapping use of resources.

Transparency

Transparency in registering voters promotes public trust in the integrity of voter registration processes and products. Civil society, particularly through professional and impartial monitoring and reporting by CSOs, and fair investigation and reporting by the media can enhance the transparency of voter registration.

3.0 Methodological Issues

The research methodology gathered relevant data from the field and the specified documents in order to analyze the material and arrive at a more complete understanding solving the frequent calls for the replacement of the Ghanaian voters' register using Kumbungu District in the Northern region. The following questions were the focus of this research: Why should parents allow the children below 18 years to register as voters? What can parents do to stop their children from registering as voters? What role do party agents play to prevent unqualified persons from going through the voter registration processes? What mechanisms exist in checking minors and non-Ghanaian citizens registering during voter registration exercises? Whether the mode of capturing voters' data contributes to multiple registration and mistakes on the final voters' register? The research was a descriptive survey through which views and opinions were sampled from registered voters (electorate). This descriptive study describes the patterns of voter registration processes, the challenges that occur and other election-related issues by the electorate. The descriptive survey was further considered the most appropriate design for conducting this study since it is the one that deals with things as they currently are (Creswell, 2003). Again, information gathered from the descriptive research can be meaningful or useful in diagnosing a situation since it involves describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions that exist. This research utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools.

The sample was chosen from the voter population of the following Electoral Areas (EAs) in the Kumbungu District: Gamprisiya; Dalung; Bogu; Gumo; and Zangbalung. The sample size was seventy seven (77) comprising five (5) Assembly Members; ten (10) Opinion Leaders; ten (10) Males and ten (10) Females from the five electoral areas; ten (10) Unit Committee Members; twelve (12) Registered Political Parties Representatives; and twenty (20) registered voters.

Holloway and Wheeler (2002:128), assert that sample size does not influence the importance or quality of the study and note that there are no guidelines in determining sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers do not normally know the number of people in the research beforehand; the sample may change in size and type during research. Sampling goes on until saturation has been achieved, namely no new information is generated (Holloway 1997:142).

Purposive and systematic sampling method techniques were used for selecting the participants for the study. The political parties' representatives were purposively sampled because they were in key positions in the electoral activities. As major stakeholders in the management of electoral administration, they have information about the challenges confronting the voter registration processes in Ghana. The political parties' representatives were made up of New Patriotic Party (NPP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), Convention People's Party (CPP), and People's Conventional Party (PNC). Creswell (2002) stated that, in purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand a phenomenon. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003), cited in Avoke (2005), also assert that purposive sampling enables researchers to handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment and typicality. In this way, the researchers built up a sample that was satisfactory to specific needs.

However, systematic sampling method technique which provides participants with equal opportunity to be randomly selected was used to select the five (5) Assembly Members; ten (10) Opinion Leaders; ten (10) Males and ten (10) Females from the five electoral areas; ten (10) Unit Committee Members; twelve (12) Registered Political Parties Representatives and twenty (20) registered voters. They were selected at random. The researchers made a head count of three and randomly selected one amongst them. Systematic sampling method was used here because the researchers wanted the sample method to be free from preconception and unfairness.

The instruments employed to collect data were questionnaire and semi- structured interview. According to Ary et al. (2002), interview and questionnaire are the two basic ways in which data are gathered in survey research.

The data collected was analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistics which allowed the researchers to use numerical values to represent scores in the sample. According to Borg and Gall (1983), descriptive statistics not only allows the researcher to use numbers but also provides the researchers with data that allow for inferences on the population and directions for answering the research questions. The returned questionnaires were scored and coded for analysis and answering of the research questions. An item-by-item analysis of data was conducted. The percentage of the total sample responding to each question was given. The data was presented according to the responses and/ or the views of the respondents. Numerical scores were assigned to them to indicate possible relationship in responses of the respondents and then frequency lists were drawn. Also, tables were presented with descriptions and discussions of some major aspects that addressed the research questions raised.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

As was earlier stated, the objective of this paper is to find solutions to the frequent calls for the replacement of the Ghanaian Voters' Register. The question then is: What is/are the panacea to the frequent calls for the replacement of Ghana's Voters' Register? The findings of this paper will focus on those things that if incorporated could help to make the voters' register more credible and robust and perhaps save the country the need to frequently replace the register.

Objectives of Voter Registration

According to R. Michael Alvarez voter registration exists for two fundamental reasons:

- Registration information is used to control who votes. Only those who are eligible to vote can register, and that eligibility is verified when the individual registers to vote. Also, registration information is used to authenticate voters when they participate (at poll sites, in early voting, or when they vote by mail). Thus, voter registration exists to control access, and to prevent voter fraud.
- Registration information is used for election management and for other election administration tasks. Voter registration lists contain the addresses of those eligible and registered, and that information is used for many purposes ranging from provision of polling places to insuring that every voter receives the ballot they are supposed to receive when they go to vote. Voter registration is also used to maintain historical information to manage voter lists going forward and to provide evidentiary information in case of a challenge to the outcome of an election.

Registration of Minors

Political parties in Ghana are guilty when it comes to the registration of minors. These political parties outdo one another in the registration of minors. Sometimes, when there is an opportunity to challenge the registration of such minors, the parties deliberately refuse to co-operate. From the analysis of the interview results, it was a general opinion of the Assembly Members (AM) and Unit Committee Members (UCM) that some of the children register to vote on Election Day.

.... They go to the registration centres without the knowledge of their parents and guardians. (Verbatim expression; from two Assembly Members and nine Unit Committee Members)

On the issue of do some people encourage them; all the respondents gave an affirmative response.

Responses to who encourage them, five Unit Committee Members and three Assembly Members mentioned politicians. They mentioned polling station executives and constituency executives who go round to observe the registration exercise.

Registration of Non-Ghanaians

Another thing that reduces the reliability of the voters' register has been with the registration of non-Ghanaians. This has been a much contested issue in most elections, particularly before the 2012 and 2016 Elections, when the two leading political parties (the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress) accused each other of bringing in non-Ghanaians in their strongholds to be registered. Responses from the fifteen (15) respondents stated that the non-Ghanaians want to become Ghanaians because some of them have stayed with us for long. Some of them are our Fulanis who have stayed with us taking care of our cattle.

Whether they (respondents) know that any registered voter can vote and be voted for in any election. They gave different responses. Ten (10) UCMs and four (4) AMs said "the non-Ghanaians can vote for somebody who is a Ghanaian but cannot contest any election in Ghana." This meant that the respondents had a limited understanding of importance of being a registered voter. In a response to a prompt question that who encourages the non-Ghanaians to register as voter all the fifteen (15) respondents said politicians encourage them to register.

Poor Knowledge about Voter Registration and Public Elections Laws

The issue of poor publicity has come up on many occasions that the Electoral Commission has embarked on its activities. The reasons have often been with either late releases of funding by governments or inadequate funding for such public education exercises. Out of the fifteen (15) respondents interviewed they all said they had no knowledge about electoral laws. The respondents said they only knew that registering and voting more than once are electoral offences but did not know which laws established that. In response to a prompt question whether they had heard of the C.I 72 and C.I 75 before, six (6) responded that they heard of the C.I. 75 during the 2012 presidential election petition in the Supreme Court where the No Verification No Vote (NVNV) was mentioned and nine (9) said they had not heard of any C.I.75. All said they had not heard of the C.I.72.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STOP MULTIPLE REGISTRATION, MINORS AND NON-GHANAIS REGISTRATION?

There were varying responses. Two (2) of the respondents interviewed said the EC should get a technology that could detect minors and non-Ghanaians as BVR technology could detect multiple registrants. Eight of respondents said persons who encourage them to register should rather be punished.

ADVICE TO EC WITH REGARD TO MULTIPLE, MINORS AND NON-GHANAIS REGISTRATIONS

All the fifteen (15) respondents interviewed said EC should maintain the BVR technology. EC should involve stakeholders in registration and every electoral activity. Two AMs suggested that such illegal registrants particulars should be removed from the main voters register.

5.0 Conclusion

The findings made so far from the study suggest several important conclusions. Seven fundamental issues were raised to solicit the view of respondents on registration of minors, non-Ghanaians and multiple registrations. It was apparent from the findings that, the voters' register used in the several general elections was bloated with deceased persons' names, minors, multiple registrants and non-Ghanaians. There were proposed ways by which the bloated voters' register can be cleaned to maintain a very credible voters' register and save the country the ritual of having to replace the voters' register after very two elections as is the case now.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

ELECTORAL COMMISSION (EMB)

- ❖ The Electoral Commission of Ghana should embark on a Continuous Voter Registration (CVR). This is to ensure that persons who turned eighteen (18) years can register any day during official working hours. Documentary evidence should be provided by applicants as a proof of eligibility.
- ❖ A very rigorous finger print scanners and webcam cameras should be used in capturing the finger prints and photographs of applicants to avoid the frustration they go through during voter registration exercises. The difficult part of the BVR processes was the capturing of the finger print and the photograph of the applicant which sometimes took several minutes. Many applicants became frustrated at this stage and felt it was DEC who deliberately did so. The finger print scanner and webcam camera used to the finger prints and the photographs respectively did not function as expected due to either physical traumas suffered by some BVR applicants.
- ❖ Both civic education and voter education should be intensified to impact knowledge that enable persons to be active, responsible and useful to and also enable them to participate properly and effectively in the electoral process.
- ❖ The electoral law should be made available to schools right from the basic levels.
- ❖ There should be inter-organizational collaboration between the EC and other state organizations whose activities can enhance the EC's work. Organization such as NCCE, Birth and Death, NIA, NHIA to just a few.
- ❖ Persons who commit electoral offences should be dealt with as agreed by some of the respondents.

THE GOVERNMENT

- ❖ The government should release fund for electoral activities as early as possible to the EMB to effectively carry out its electoral programmes.
- ❖ The government should not be seen interfering in the electoral process.
- ❖ Election Fund should be set up by government to adequate funds at all-time available for the EMB to access to carry out electoral activities on time. A major voter registration exercise takes over fifty (50) percent of the election budget.

STAKEHOLDERS

- ❖ Political Parties should assist the EC in preventing unqualified persons from registering as voters.
- ❖ They recruit people who are dedicated, committed and knowledgeable about the electoral process to represent them at the registration centres.
- ❖ Traditional Authorities should be involved in the voter education to have the first hand information about the electoral process. They can at their areas of jurisdiction assist in preventing the registration of unqualified persons.

References

- African centre for Elections (1999). Elections Quality, Public Trust are Central Issues for Africa's Upcoming Contests.
- Ary, D. and Razavieh, A. (2002). Introduction to Research. 6th Edition, Wadsworth, Belmont.
- Astrid Evrensel (2010). Voter Registration in Africa. A Comparative Analysis.
- Bartolini, S. (2000). Collusion, Competition and Democracy: Part II. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol 12, Issue 1, Sage Discipline Hubs.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (2nd ed, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Common Wealth Observer Group (2008). Ghana Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Reports.
- Gall, D.M. and Borg, W. R. (1983). Educational Research: An Introduction. New York: Longman.
- Erikson, R., S. (1981). Why Do People Vote? Because They Are Registered. *Journal of American Politics Research*, Vol 9, Issue 3.
- European Observer Union (2008). Ghana Final Report: Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.
- Ginsberg, B. (1982). The Consequence of Consent: Elections, Citizens Control and Popular Acquiescence, Reading, Mass: Addison – Wesley Publishing.
- Holloway, T. and Wheeler, S. (2002). Qualitative Research in Nursing.
- Kelley, S. (1967). Determinants of Participation in Presidential Elections. *The Journal of Law and Economic Analysis of Political Behaviour: Vol. 18, No. 3, Series 29*. The University of Chicago Press Journal.
- Namugera, P. (2012). Thematic Workshop 4th -9th March 2012, Mombasa Kenya. Information Technology and Parliamentary Elections.
- Piven, F. F. and Cloward R. A. (1988). Why Americans Don't Vote. New York Pantheon, Google Scholar.
- Rosenstone, S. J. and Wolfinger, R. E. (1978). 'The Effect of Registrations Laws on Voter Turnout: American Political Science Review, 91:45-65. Google Scholar.
- Teixeira, A. (1992). The Disappearing American Voter. Greenwood Press.